

Accept My Claim (As I Hold My Breath)

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Summary: Shifters outnumber humans and the world has accepted the ancient shifter ritual of Claiming. This includes courting, the verbal claim, the mating bite, and the public claiming. Alpha Derek has known Stiles was his mate for 3 years. When a rogue shifter tries to claim Stiles, Derek has to let go of his issues and get to his mate. M/M A/U

1. Chapter 1

Accept My Claim (As I Hold My Breath)

****Welcome to my new Sterek ff! Enjoy!****

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Stiles happily shoved another handful of curly fries into his mouth as a sudden growl echoed through the cafeteria. Stiles rolled his eyes. "Here we go again," he mumbled around the mouthful of food.

Scott chuckled and offered him the pudding cup off his lunch tray. His best friend obviously knew pudding made everything better. Not as good as curly fries, but they served in a pinch. Giving Scott a grateful grin, he turned and looked around to see who was getting claimed. He quickly saw long blonde hair hidden behind the muscular frame of Boyd. No big surprise there. Boyd and Erica had been an unacknowledged couple for months. While they didn't spend a whole lot of tie together in public, Boyd did manage to show up and beat the shit out of anyone who gave the sweet girl a hard time. People had wondered why a Claiming hadn't happened before now. Her health had probably played a big part, Stiles figured. Erica's epilepsy was getting progressively worse. This would be good for her then. Boyd was a born wolf and now that he was claiming her, she would be offered the Bite by Boyd's alpha, the uber handsome leader of the

Beacon Hills pack, Derek Hale.

"Do you accept my claim?" The question was roared so that everyone could hear it, as was tradition.

Erica's quiet answer of "I accept your claim", was probably loud enough for the people directly around them to hear, though Stiles could barely make it out.

Soon after, her cry of pleasurable pain "the mating bite" was heard before the sounds of ecstasy filled the room "the physical claiming.

Ah, the act of Claiming. A millennia long practice that was continued to this day, even in the not-so hallowed halls of high school. They had been learning about the tradition since they were old enough to understand the difference between shifters and humans. Thanks to the extreme immune systems of shifters mixed with things that killed off humans like the plague and common cold, there were more shifters in the world than humans. Not that it mattered, there weren't any differences in the way people and shifters were treated. Sure there were human supremacists and shifter purists, but all in all, people were just people, it didn't matter if they had claws or not.

Since shifters only took mates through Claiming, the practice was introduced to kids when sex education was and then again in high school. When shifters reached maturity, typically a year or so after puberty, they were able to scent out their mate. If they determined they wanted to be with that person they went through with the Claiming. Some shifters chose not to mate. Sure it meant that something would always be missing in their lives and their animal would never be truly content; but, hey, sometimes mates were douchebags. Then again, some shifters were douchebags and didn't believe in mates or just wanted to be wolf-sluts.

Stiles had seen plenty of Claiming's starting around sophomore year. Jackson Whittemore had taken every step in the process seriously, but then again with Lydia Martin as his mate, there was no way he was going to mess up. He courted her (not necessary, but considered traditional), gave her gifts to show he could provide for her (gifts could be anything from baubles like jewelry to actual symbols of provision like cars, houses, and college tuition), then (not so traditionally, except if you were Lydia) he let her pick the time and spot of the public Claiming. As it went, the claim-er approached the claim-ee and bit them "more held them in place than bit" in the back of the neck. This signified the beginning of the ritual. They then released the potential mate and asked if they accepted the shifter's claim. The claim-ee accepted, the mating bite was given and then they consummated the mating right there. In public. Sex in front of people. For the most part, it wasn't lovey-dovey either. It tended to be pretty rough as the shifter's animal took over and that didn't lead to soft touches and slow dances.

That first Claiming had been intense for Stiles. Seeing his childhood love not only get claimed but then seeing her nude form being forcefully taken by Jackson Fuckhead Whittemore was as crushing as it was erotic. He'd felt slightly ashamed by having to retreat to the restroom to solve his growing problem, but felt better at the fact that he wasn't the only one in the bathroom. People just didn't acknowledge it, it was easier that way and less embarrassing for

everyone involved.

The only Claiming he was uncomfortable with was Scott and Allison's a little over a year after his friend became a werewolf. Scott and his mother had petitioned Alpha Hale for Scott to have the Bite due to medical reasons when he was a freshmen and he was approved. When Scott had talked to Stiles about his intention to claim Allison, Stiles had helped him with courting and gift ideas, supporting him every step of the way. He'd stayed on the field during the Claiming (it happened after lacrosse practice last year), but he'd kept his eyes closed. Seeing his best friend getting it on was just a tad more than he could handle, it would be like watching a brother.

By now, though, seeing a Claiming wasn't a very big deal. It happened at least once per month in locations from the cafeteria to the parking lot to the football field and the mall (for some reason this was a very common location). After the Claiming, the couple had the option of planning and holding a reception, much like human receptions where they could have dances, gifts, fancy dresses and such. Many adopted the human tradition of exchanging rings as well. Lydia's finger constantly looked like it was going to fall off thanks to the giant rock balanced on it. The final step tended to be the Bite, if they decided to go for it. Lydia had decided against it, though she said she was keeping it open as an option.

Stiles sighed as his eyes drifted over to Lydia, smiling when she met his gaze and waved. They'd become friends over the last year and he was really happy for her, even if her mate was a douche. He wasn't in love with her anymore, thank goodness. No, that ship had sailed. Now he saw her more as the picture of what he would never have. There was no way in hell anyone would ever want him. He was awkward, had a monster case of ADHD and that alone was enough to chase people away. He was only kinda decent looking, not enough to attract anyone, human or shifter. Hell, he didn't even care about gender, he was good with either, not that he'd ever had a chance. He'd thought something would have happened with Malia after she'd begun sniffing him a lot and spending time with him, but then she'd mated with the new kitsune, Kira, out of the blue. Maybe he was meant to be a lone wolf only without the wolf part. Just alone.

A howl echoed through the cafeteria, signaling the completion of the claim and the room broke into applause. Stiles joined in, adding in a whistle. He was happy for Erica. She deserved this chance to be whole and healthy. At least somebody got to be happy since it wouldn't be him.

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"Scott, did you see that?" Stiles shrieked, his arms flailing over his head in excitement.

"I did see that! Great job, Stiles," Scott said, patting his friend on the back with a grin.

"Scott. Did. You. See. That?!" Stiles repeated, bouncing on his toes, his body unable to contain his joy.

"Yeah, buddy, you scored," he replied, watching the stands for his mate.

"Scott, I scored. Twice!" Stiles didn't think Scott was giving his accomplishment the attention it deserved.

"I know, I was there for both of them," Scott continued, grinning as he saw Allison walking toward him. "I'll catch you later, Stiles. Great job out there.

"Yeah, okay, bye!" Stiles flailed his goodbye wave, still pumped with adrenaline. Looking around, he realized he was alone, no big surprise. His dad was going to be working late so there was no reason to hurry home. Grabbing his stick and a ball, he started running drills hoping to burn off some energy, a proud smile playing at his mouth as he went.

An hour later, he was panting and running to get his water bottle out of his bag. As he bent over, he got chills up and down his back. Someone was watching him. He didn't know how he knew, but he jerked up and looked around. His dad had taught him to always be aware of his surroundings and he knew someone was out there. Out the corner of his eye, he saw a black shadow disappear into the trees at the opposite end of the field. He shivered as he made his way to his jeep, realizing quickly that the chills and shivers hadn't been from fear or trepidation. It had been anticipation.

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His mate was alone again. McCall considered himself Stiles' best friend, but ever since he mated with the Argent girl, he hadn't acted much like a friend. He ignored Stiles, brushed him off, canceled their hang outs and didn't seem to see that Stiles was lonely. His mate was alone too much of the time between McCall's love life and the Sheriff being too busy at work.

He'd wanted to cheer when Stiles had made his first score and he actually gave a little jump and a fist pump when he scored the second, though Stiles would never know. His boy had worked so hard to gain control over his lanky body and he'd done well. He grew out of too-long, gangly limbs and into a long, leanly muscled, lithe body that made the shifter pant with need. Watching him run and shoot the ball into the net by himself over and over, he was sorely tempted to step out of the shadows, to go talk to Stiles, encourage him, let him know that he wasn't alone and never would be again. Instead he stood there, staring. When Stiles jogged over to his bag and bent over, he'd let out a growl, the sight of his mate's pert ass was too delicious to ignore. He was startled when, seemingly in response to his growl, Stiles had stood and whipped around, like he was looking for the source of the sound. He couldn't have heard it. The sound was nearly sub-vocal. He'd quickly stepped behind a tree and barely withheld a gasp when Stiles seemed to look right at him. There was a tense pause before Stiles tilted his head adorably, then shook it, grabbing his bag and leaving the field.

The wolf waited before following and watching until his mate was safely locked inside his jeep and pulling out of the parking lot. He then turned and jogged his way home.

He walked around to the back of the house where the reception for Boyd and Erica was being held. Grabbing a drink, he walked up onto the porch and whistled to gain the attention of his pack, hiding his frown at the sight of McCall smiling happily, knowing Stiles was

going home to an empty, lonely house.

Clearing his throat, he held his drink up. "To Boyd and Erica, may their lives be full of love, cubs, and prosperity!" He let loose a long, deep throated howl and heard as his pack joined him, the air filled with the sounds of joy and the hope of new family.

Boyd walked up to him, his new mate trailing him shyly, blonde hair covering her face. "Alpha Hale, may I present my mate, Erica Reyes."

Derek Hale hugged his pack mate before lightly embracing Erica. "Welcome to the pack, Erica," he said and kissed her gently on the forehead.

"Thank you, Alpha Hale," she said quietly.

"Did you two decide on a date?" he asked, smiling at her kindly.

"Yes, can we do it tonight?" Boyd asked hopefully.

"You didn't want to take the night to celebrate?"

They both shook their heads. "We won't be able to truly celebrate until she is no longer in danger. Once she has adjusted to the change, then we can relax and enjoy our mating."

Derek nodded. "Understood. Okay, well, why don't we get you two settled into one of the rooms downstairs and get started then. Everyone here knows and understands."

Boyd grinned at Erica in relief and held his hand out to Derek. "Thank you so much, Alpha. I can't tell you what this means to us."

Derek dragged him in for another hug and squeezed his beta tightly. "I have a pretty good idea."

Erica offered her hand and he gave it a gentle shake. "May the moon bring you your mate, Alpha. Thank you." The relief on her face was palpable.

It took everything Derek had to not show the pain he felt. "Thank you, Erica."

As he escorted them to a safe room in the basement, he wondered if he would ever get the chance to have this with Stiles. Whether he wanted to be changed or not, to have the chance to call him mate would be more than he could ever hope for. It was too bad he didn't deserve him. If there was anything in him that was worthy, he would claim his boy in a minute. But there wasn't. So he wouldn't.

2. Chapter 2

"You know, nephew, this could be considered stalking," Peter said quietly, coming up next to Derek who was once again watching Stiles on the lacrosse field alone.

"Shut up," Derek replied without any heat. "He's always alone now. Scott doesn't even try to spend any time with him." As much as he'd had sympathy for the young asthmatic when he'd first met him a couple years ago, everything about Scott McCall was now getting on his nerves.

"He is still considered newly mated," Peter reminded him.

"And yet Allison finds time for her friends. Why does McCall have to follow her to the mall when he could go hang out with Stiles?" Derek looked at his mate with sadness and longing.

Peter nudged him with his shoulder. "He wouldn't be so alone if you got to know him." He said this to Derek at least once per week, just as he knew what Derek's response would be.

"Not yet," Derek murmured. "Soon."

The answer was always the same. Soon. But soon had been coming for at least three years now, since young Stiles had hit puberty. That was the moment when Derek had been drawn to this same field by the beautiful scent of his mate. He had been shocked when he'd smelled the notes of sweet grass and summer coming from the young teen which had instantly made him think of home, love, and forever. He had recognized Scott McCall from his meetings with the young man and his mother who were petitioning for him to have the Bite. The gangly youth next to him was laughing and running around the field on coltish legs that were almost too long for his body as they practiced their new lacrosse skills. That delicious scent was emanating from him, calling him like a siren song. He hadn't intended to tell anyone, but as soon as Peter saw him next, he asked who his mate was. Derek tried to deny it, but Peter was a genius at reading people and Derek found he was grateful he had someone to talk to about the confusing new feelings coursing through him. He feared it would bring distress to his uncle, but Peter instead smiled as he shared memories about first meeting his mate, Anna.

For that first full week, he had been guilty of stalking Stiles. He learned everything he could about the young man and easily fell in love with him. He was young, only fifteen, but was already strong, brave, loyal, shockingly smart, clever, and unbelievably funny. Derek almost gave himself away so many times because he would bust out laughing at Stiles' many jokes, quirks, and pranks. He loved playing jokes on his dad and Scott and always got caught, but he never failed to laugh, his warm whiskey eyes sparkling with delight at his own cleverness. Those eyes staggered Derek with the depths they hid from the world. Joy, purity, and innocence were balanced by intelligence, grief, and maturity. He was a natural caretaker, keeping his home clean and cooking healthy foods for his dad at the same time he always had an extra inhaler for Scott on hand and was always willing to tutor his friend in any of his classes.

Stiles was obviously beautiful on the inside as well as the outside. He once heard his young mate mourn about his lack of appeal physically and this staggered him. Not appealing? Did he not see his beautiful porcelain skin, interrupted by delicious moles that begged to be kissed, licked and nibbled? Did he miss the lean muscles forming along those long arms and legs, growing stronger and more limber over time? How did he not see the beautiful chestnut highlights in his dark brown hair? When Stiles finally grew his hair

out, Derek often found himself wanting to run his fingers through the length, or during darker moments, wanting to grip it tightly as he pounded into his young body. Those moments were becoming more numerous as Stiles got older. The sound and scent of his mate pleasuring himself was a torture he was now used to. The first time he'd heard Stiles having "Stiles Time" as he called it, he'd ended up with his claws sinking into his own palms as he fought the desire to leap through his bedroom window and help him along. The scent of his desire and pleasure was delicious and made his mouth water with the desire to sink his mouth down on the younger man's hard length and swallow him whole. He was guilty of jacking off in time with Stiles on more occasions than he would be comfortable admitting. Just scenting his mate most days made his cock hard as it got more difficult to fight his desire to claim him. It was too easy to picture their Claiming, sinking his fangs into that long, flawless neck before sinking his cock into that pert ass that was perfectly formed.

"Nephew, you stink of lust," Peter informed him dryly.

Derek coughed and turned away from the field. "Sorry." They began walking home, Derek only glancing back at his mate once which he found to be an accomplishment.

"I know why you are waiting to claim your mate, but you've proven yourself by now, Derek. The pack is strong, prospering and expanding beyond our wildest dreams. It's okay to take him for yourself now."

His uncle's words were welcome and filled him with pride, but the fear he'd been living with for almost a decade was hard to overcome. His lack of strength had cost his family their lives, no matter what Peter and Cora told him. When Kate and Gerard Argent had become part of the human supremacist movement and then rogue hunters and gone after the Hale pack, Derek had been just fifteen years old. He'd been home that day with his entire family, the only one absent was Peter who'd been away with an allied pack helping train their new members. The Argents waited until the middle of the night and attacked with silver and fire. Derek had woken to the smell of fire and had leapt into action, running to his sisters' room and finding it already on fire. He'd drug Laura and Cora out into the yard before turning back to the house to find his parents and aunt. On his way back in, he was shot and lost consciousness. He woke up only to discover his home was gone and he had lost everyone but Cora, his other sister having died from burns and smoke inhalation. Peter arrived home and nearly went feral in his grief. He and Derek had immediately set out in search of the Argents. Though Sheriff Stilinski questioned them multiple times after that, the case of the missing Argents was never solved. It never would be.

Derek had expected Peter to want to be Alpha, but his uncle later told him he'd never wanted the position and since Derek was the oldest living descendent of Talia Hale, he became Alpha. His main goal was rebuilding the pack. When they finally were able to pull themselves from their grief, they leveled the old house and built a garden on top of it in memory of the lives lost. Nearly a mile away they rebuilt the pack house making it bigger and safer with underground escape tunnels and using fireproof materials.

Once their home was done, they put out word into the town and

neighboring packs that they were accepting applications, of a sort, for membership in their pack. Derek didn't want to limit the pack to family members as Talia had done. Applications weren't common, but they had to take precautions after losing their entire family. Slowly humans began petitioning for the Bite which would then enter them into the pack and other wolves began applying to join the pack. Vernon Boyd was the first born wolf he accepted and he was Derek's second next to Peter. An ally of theirs, Deucalion, sent them the orphan twins, Ethan and Aiden Thompson. The first human to petition was Isaac Lahey who had been severely injured by his abusive father. His father died later from a gunshot wound after a standoff with Sheriff Stilinski when he refused to hand Isaac over to get help. Derek accepted him immediately and saw Isaac as a little brother, the young wolf clinging to him and crawling into his bed to cuddle most nights when he had nightmares.

Within three years, the pack quadrupled and was proud to have a mix of humans, wolves, a kitsune, and even an emissary in the form of a veterinarian named Alan Deaton. Peter said that Deaton had wanted to work with his mother, but she had turned him away, wanting only shifters in her pack. Derek was surprised as he learned more and more that his mother had been a bit of a purist. He had learned nothing but tolerance and acceptance from her so it was shocking to learn just how many opportunities she had shut down. He made it a goal to give everyone at least the chance to be heard. There were many he turned down or sent to neighboring packs. Peter had proved invaluable in being a walking deception detector. Not just in hearing lies, which Derek could do, but spotting those who had ulterior motives or had delusions of gaining power.

One guilty of both was Theo Raeken who'd shown up in Beacon Hills and, after being turned down by Derek, was eager to start his own pack. He'd had no luck so far, but Peter was watching him in case he started any problems. Derek didn't have a problem with another pack living in Beacon Hills, but Raeken's kind of pack would only bring headaches, not peace and prosperity.

Derek's pack was strong and everyone got along for the most part, it was the best Derek could have hoped for. He knew that it was what he'd hoped to accomplish when he went to claim Stiles, but there was still fear in him, fear that he wasn't good enough to protect Stiles yet, that he still had something to make up for. Soon, he told himself. "Soon," he told Peter as they walked into the pack house.

"Whatever you say, nephew," Peter said with a smile. "Just don't wait too long." With that cryptic statement, he walked away.

Derek made his way to his office but stopped when he heard the familiar sounds of a video game being played and detoured to the game room. When he'd made the plans for the new house, he'd included several extra-large rooms to be used for the entire pack. There was the game room with the pool table, foosball, air hockey, and several wide screen televisions and every game console the pack could find. There was also a library with enough tables and desks for the high school pups to do their homework and find any resources they might need. Derek considered education one of the highest priorities to the shifters aside from learning about their dual natures. There was a room that was meant for any uses the female shifters wanted to use it for, though none had claimed it yet. There were also several small

rooms dispersed between the larger bedrooms in the second and third stories of the house to be used for eventual nurseries, he hoped. In the basement, there were several secured rooms for new shifters to adjust to the change and for any shifters who were having trouble controlling themselves during the full moon. There was a large barn shaped building outside that held their gym and training rooms. Derek wanted to make sure they had everything they could need or want. He wanted the best life for his pack.

Walking into the game room, he saw Scott sitting by himself playing some zombie game, an open soda on the coffee table in front of him.

"Hey Scott, where's Allison?" Scott was always near his mate, which was also his reason for not spending time with Stiles.

"She's at the mall with Lydia and some girls from school," Scott said, shooting him a smile before looking back at his game.

"Why don't you ever have friends out here?" Derek dropped into an overstuffed chair near the teen. He was actually curious.

"Friends out here?" Scott seemed truly baffled.

"Yeah," Derek gave him a curious look. "You do know the pack is welcome to have company out here right? This isn't a pack exclusive house."

Scott dropped his controller, his eyes wide. "Really? I thought it was. I never see anyone bring friends out here."

"Boyd brings friends all the time, they just tend to hang out in the gym. The twins have friends over too, I guess you've just never seen them." Derek thought about it and realized the twins typically hung out in their rooms. "Regardless, feel free to have people over. Why don't you invite the Stilinski boy over?" The suggestion was out before he could tell his brain to shut up. He clenched his jaw, fighting the urge to take it back.

Scott's face lit up. "That would be awesome! I keep blowing him off because I want to be out here," his expression was shamed. "It feels safer out here than in town sometimes."

Derek moved and sat next to the young shifter and threw his arm around him. "It's perfectly normal to feel safer in the pack house and pack lands than in town. Your wolf feels more secure here. You'll grow more adjusted the more you mature as a shifter. Don't let it hinder your relationships though, Stiles is perfectly welcome here anytime you want him over. Does he know why you prefer it out here?"

The shifter's looked pained. "No. I just tell him I want to spend time with Allison, which I do, but Allison doesn't have any problems hanging out at the mall or at friend's houses. I just go with her or come back here alone. God, he must hate me."

Derek felt relieved knowing Scott wasn't just being an asshole to Stiles. "Well, call him up and have him come out. He can stay for dinner if you want. The only time I would step in and have company go home was if it started interfering in pack business or your school

work."

Scott hugged his alpha tight, thrilled he got to have his friend back. "Thanks Alpha, I'm gonna call him now."

Derek smiled and squeezed him tight. He sat back and gave him a stern look. "If something like this comes up again, just talk to me, okay?"

The teen nodded enthusiastically looking very much like a puppy.. "I will!"

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Stiles leaned forward, looking for the turn into the preserve Scott had described to him. Everyone knew the pack house was out here, but nobody came out here without an express invitation. Scott had called up out of the blue and invited him out. Stiles may have broken out into a spazzy dance of joy at the thought of spending time with his best friend. Scott said they needed to talk and then they could have an epic video game tournament if he wanted. He'd even told him he could stay for dinner. It had been so long since they'd spent time together out of school. This was going to be amazing!

After driving and turning several times, he finally passed a sign welcoming him to the Hale pack lands. He found himself looking out every window, looking at the different buildings and seeing people he knew. He received friendly waves from those who recognized him and saw Scott standing outside the freaking huge pack house. His friend waved him over, pointing at a parking space. Stiles eased into the spot and turned off his baby.

Getting out, he got a bro hug from Scott which made everything feel okay again. He'd felt a little lost without the best friend he'd had since the first day of preschool. Now, things felt like they might be able to get back to normal. He just had to try not to screw things up again.

"Hey, sit with me for a second," Scott said and led him to an awesome porch swing that had obviously been shifter-proofed with heavy chains connecting it to the roof above them.

Stiles couldn't help the happy sigh that escaped him sitting next to his best friend on the porch of this epic fucking house.

"I'm sorry I've been blowing you off so much recently," Scott began.

Stiles waved a hand at him. "It's okay. I'm sure it's not easy being friends with the town spaz," he gave a hollow laugh, his knee bouncing in agitation.

Scott stopped the gentle motion they'd started in the swing and turned toward Stiles. "It wasn't because of you, Stiles. It was me. I'm the problem not you."

His brown eyes grew wide. "Really? I just figured between wanting to spend time with Allison and my ever growing list of irritating â€" though loveable â€" qualitiesâ€" his smile was filled with hope.

Scott shook his head. "Never! Are you kidding? I miss your flailing and comic book rants. And yeah, I want to spend time with Allison, but that isn't all of it." Taking a deep breath, he explained about feeling safer on pack land then in town, and that Derek told him it was normal to feel that way.

"Well, it makes a kind of sense, doesn't it?" Stiles said, patting his friend on the knee. "So it really wasn't because of me? It's because of your damaged ass?" He grinned widely. "I knew I should have renewed that ad on Craigslist for a new best friend."

Scott laughed and punched him in the shoulder. "Hey now! Yes, it's my problem, but you're stuck with me. Derek said you are welcome out here any time and only pack business or my homework would get in the way."

"Suh-weet!" Stiles gave him a high five. "Show me around this most awesome pack house, you mental midget."

Scott grinned, he had no problem with the insult, it was like coming home in a way.

Stiles bounced behind Scott on a tour starting in the out buildings. They stopped and talked with Boyd and Erica for a couple of minutes. Everyone had been shocked by the changes Erica had gone through when she received the Bite. She was outgoing now, confident, vibrant with a raw sexiness to her that Boyd was very aware of and took great delight in. Stiles squeaked when she ran up to him and gave him a hug. They'd never really been friends, but he had helped her out several times over the years when she'd been bullied or needed help through a seizure. She nicknamed him Batman because he always seemed to have something on him to help people from Scott's inhaler to sweets to help her through her low sugar dizziness. He called her Catwoman because her laugh sometimes sounded like a cat meowing.

Stiles embraced her gently and then skittered away quickly when he heard the growl come from Boyd. Scott jumped in front of him, but Boyd held up his hands and shot an apologetic look to Stiles.

"Sorry, dude. I'm still getting used to the protective feelings the mating opened up. I didn't mean to growl at you," Boyd said and held out a fist for Stiles to bump.

Stiles grinned at him and bumped it, then shook out his hand from the pain. "Damn shifters and their bones made of brick. No problem man!"

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Derek knew it pushed him to an all new high level of creeper, but he couldn't help keeping an eye on his mate through the security cameras. He'd heard Scott's explanation of why he'd kept his distance and smiled at the open relief and joy on his beautiful mate's face. Watching his lips as he talked was distracting and he couldn't help the hardening of his cock. He continued to watch as Scott showed him around. He was thrilled and proud of both his pack and his mate at how easily they accepted him and vice versa. His mate was well known

and well-liked judging by the reception of several of his packmates. Seeing Erica hug Stiles was encouraging. She'd come so far in the few days since she'd been turned. Cora, Deaton, even the twins knew Stiles and welcomed him to the pack house. He also noticed people were giving Scott shit for not having Stiles out sooner and Scott received it all with a blush and hesitance. Stiles flipped it back on the pack members saying Scott knew the pack couldn't handle all of his fabulosity, so he had to ease into it. From there, it was more of a joke instead of the chiding it was meant to be.

He could burst with the pride he had for his mate. Stiles had been truly hurt by Scott's behavior, but had not only forgiven him but was now defending him. His mate was strong, loyal, and worthy of all the adoration Derek felt for him.

Once the friends made their way to the kitchen to gather snacks, Derek decided it was time. He walked quickly to the kitchen. Sure, he and Stiles knew who the other was, you couldn't help it in a town this small. Derek was the alpha and Stiles was the only son of a very popular sheriff. You ended up crossing paths now and then. But they'd never been officially introduced and he wasn't going to miss this chance to touch his mate, even if it was only a handshake.

Rounding the corner into the kitchen, he caught Scott's eye.

"Stiles, this our Alpha, Derek Hale. Derek, this is my best friend Stiles Stilinski," Scott said formally.

He was hit again with pride as he saw Stiles hold his hand out palm up, the motion acknowledging Derek as a higher rank than him. Not many humans acknowledged shifter rank, much less put those kind of manners to use.

"It's nice to meet you, Alpha," Stiles said, his whiskey eyes shining, a wide, friendly smile on his face.

"Likewise, Stiles, welcome to the Hale pack," Derek got out, his eyes not leaving Stiles'. His hand touched the soft, but firm hand of his mate and his heart nearly pounded out of his chest.

Stiles gasped. As soon as the alpha had grasped his hand, a shock had went up his arm and seemingly right into his chest. He looked at Derek, confused. The alpha's shockingly light green eyes pierced right into him. A smile lifted the full lips surrounded by artfully grown stubble and though it happened to quick, Stiles swore the werewolf alpha winked at him.

"You are welcome here, Stiles. With the pack's relationship with your father, we consider you both friends of the pack. So even if your friend here doesn't invite you, feel free to come out anytime you want," Derek said, giving a teasing smile to Scott. And while what he said was mostly true, usually 'friends' of the pack were made so because of something they had done for their pack, like the sheriff. He was extending that a bit to include Stiles, but he had to make sure his mate knew he could come to him whenever he wanted or needed.

Stiles nodded and smiled, nudging Scott in the side. "See, now I don't need your lame ass."

Scott rolled his eyes. "Yeah, whatever. Come on, I'm gonna kick your ass on COD."

"You wish, Scotty," Stiles said and gave Derek a little finger wave as they left the room.

Derek watched Stiles pert rear end leave the room meanwhile feeling shock that he'd actually winked at his mate. But, he saw Stiles react to the shock of his hand, a little known reaction humans had to meeting their shifter mate. It wasn't a strong enough feeling to let humans know they'd met their mate â€" most would just write it off â€" so it wasn't taught in school. Stiles felt it though and Derek had felt such joy he'd had to react and so he'd winked at his mate. Foolish, yes, but there was nothing to be done about it now.

"Alpha, a word please?" Boyd asked, coming into the kitchen.

"Sure," Derek said and they walked into his office. Derek closed the door and leaned against his desk. "What's up?"

"Theo Raeken has decided it was time to get an education. He's been here for months but suddenly he wants to go back to high school. He enrolled at Beacon Hills and starts next week. I figured you would want to know," Boyd reported.

"Damn. Okay, good work. I'll look into it as well. Keep an eye on the pack at school. We don't know what kind of crap Raeken is cooking up." A feeling in his gut told him this was a situation he'd end up getting involved in, and not in a good way.

3. Chapter 3

Chapter Three

****As requested (mostly on AO3), I've done some editing to allow for Theo to be the shifter after Stiles, instead of Matt. The second chapter now reflects that in the change to the short conversation between Boyd and Derek at the very end of the chapter. Take a look at that real quick before reading this chapter. This change was for you, dear readers, as I can't STAND Theoâ€" not even in the 'love to hate' way. I didn't want to give him anything more in the story, but so many requested it, I figured I would go with it. I hope you like it!****

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That first day at the pack house was a changing point in Stiles' life. He'd had so much fun hanging out with Scott and the other shifters, he eagerly accepted an invitation to come back the next day. Dinner that night was interesting because the illusive alpha, Derek appeared to give a hand in the cooking. Interesting because Stiles had already offered to help Erica and Boyd with the cooking. He was showing them his recipe for spaghetti and meatballs, using his grandma's special homemade sauce recipe. Derek entered quietly, listening as Stiles was discussing the best tomatoes and herbs to use to bring out the flavor. He then offered to chop whatever was needed. Stiles didn't know how to handle it. Alphas, as far as he knew, didn't help with menial things like cooking. It turned out he was

very wrong, pleasantly so. Erica teased Stiles about his Batman abilities, making him turn red in front of the mysterious, yet drop dead gorgeous, alpha. Stiles was sure she knew what she was doing judging by the mischievous twinkle in her big brown eyes. Boyd scoffed at Batman "fighting words in Stiles' opinion - and brought up the benefits of the Punisher which sparked a debate between he and Stiles as Stiles couldn't let that conversation stand.

"Batman kicks ass," Derek replied quietly.

The kitchen went silent at his words. Stiles couldn't help the wide, pleased smile that broke out on his face. "See," he said smugly. "That alpha's word is final. Batman rocks. Punisher sucks bat ass."

Derek huffed a quiet chuckle and Stiles beamed with pride. He hadn't seen the alpha smile before and it was so worth it. His first visit to the house had been intimidating, meeting the alpha had been the most nerve-wracking experience of his life so far. But, as he'd heard from other pack members, Derek was pretty cool. Quiet and serious, he really cared about his pack members and apparently their friends too. Stiles felt completely welcome and that wasn't a common feeling for him. Now here he was cooking in the kitchen with the most powerful shifter in Beacon Hills and he'd made the man not only participate in a comic book debate, but laugh as well. It was a good night.

And that smile—| good god that smile was gorgeous. Those full, wide lips pulled back to expose adorable teeth, and yes teeth can be adorable damn it. His eyebrows, dark and thick, seemed capable of holding entire conversations on their own, but when he smiled, they raised up a little as his eyes crinkled in the corners, it was all just beautiful perfection. Stiles really tried to control his body's reactions because he knew shifters could smell things like lust and attraction. He couldn't help it, though. Derek had obviously come in from working out or something. He was in a light grey wife beater that made his eyes even brighter "if possible" and his muscles had muscles of their own, all of which made Stiles and Stiles Jr. want to stand up and pay attention. He wanted to lick those muscles among other body parts and rub himself all over the alpha like a cat. No! Bad Stiles. And Stiles Jr. Tomatoes, he told himself, crush tomatoes, add herbs, no more sexy-wolf-in-a-tank-top-then-possibly-naked thoughts.

"Too late," Erica whispered in his ear as Boyd and Derek chatted about the new Batman movie coming out. "We can all smell it."

Stiles felt his entire body flush as he stole a quick glance at the object of his lustful fantasies. A tiny smile was playing at the corner of the wolf's mouth and though Stiles didn't know if it was meant for him, it was better than a shifted face intent on clawing Stiles' in half.

From that day on, it was strange if Stiles wasn't at the pack house. He and Erica became closer and most nights took it upon themselves to cook dinner. Stiles couldn't help the stupid smile that he got when Derek would stop by to check on their progress. More often than not, that small almost-smile was on the alpha's mouth and Stiles couldn't help but begin to hope. For what, he didn't know. There was no way he was the mate of the alpha, but maybe there was hope for something, anything.

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As good as everything was going at the pack house, it was the exact opposite at school. Stiles didn't know what it was about the new student, Theo Raeken, but the shifter severely creeped him out. He met him the first day because he was assigned to show him around the school. The shifter had sniffed him in a very obvious manner which everyone knew was poor manners. While everyone knew shifters got their first impressions from scenting, it was considered bad form to make someone uncomfortable to do it. And boy was Stiles uncomfortable. The first time Stiles had turned his back on Theo, he'd felt a nose quickly followed by a tongue sweep along his neck and behind his ear. A hastily squeaked "Dude! Bad manners!" made him back off. The shifter just smirked at him and asked if they were continuing the tour. When he was done and Theo was delivered to his class, Stiles couldn't help running to the restroom and wiping off his neck with a soapy paper towel. Everything about having the shifter near him had felt wrong.

That afternoon he found himself at the pack house, for the first time arriving without an invitation. Scott had left right after school for a dinner with Allison's parents. Stiles couldn't face the thought of a night alone at home. He understood a bit about why Scott felt safer at the pack house than he did in town. He definitely felt safer here, despite knowing Theo was a shifter, he knew he wasn't part of the pack.

Pulling up, he walked up on the porch, but instead of going inside to see who was home, he sat on the swing and pushed himself slowly.

A moment later, the door opened and none other than the object of his every current fantasy stepped through.

"Stiles, what's up? Where's Scott?" Derek asked, coming and leaning against the porch rail across from Stiles. He had seen his mate arrive on the cameras alone and could see something was bothering him. His mate was a bright, shining person, always in motion. Now he was sitting quietly, his hands resting in his lap, though his fingers twisted and untwisted restlessly. It was physically impossible to resist seeing if he needed help.

"Um, Scott had a dinner with Allison's folks. I hope it's okay if I'm here," he replied quietly, looking down at his hands.

Something was definitely wrong. He'd never seen his mate look so troubled, even when he was spending all of his time alone. This last week had been magical with his mate in the house every day, his laughter and smiles filling up the empty parts of Derek's heart and the pack house. Seeing Stiles bond with his pack made him ecstatic with joy. The only way it could be better would be to see his mark on that long, pale neck. Focus, he told himself.

"Of course it's okay, I told you that you're welcome anytime you want," Derek assured him. He longed to put his mate at ease, take him in his arms until he felt comfortable sharing whatever was bothering him. He gave himself as much as he could by moving over to join Stiles on the swing.

It was as he sat down that everything went to hell.

Derek subtly tilted his head to fill his senses with the summer bouquet of his mate's scent, when he smelled it. A shifter had already been at his mate's neck today, his stink was all over Stiles' skin though he could tell his mate had tried to wash it away, his skin still slightly pink. The scent was just drowned out enough that he couldn't decipher who it was.

"Who the hell touched you?" He demanded with a roar as he leapt away from the swing, scared of his own reaction.

Stiles couldn't believe this was the same wolf he'd been growing feelings for. The alpha's eyes were glowing red, his hands in claws at his sides. Fear froze him in place, leaving him unable to answer.

"Answer me!" Derek demanded loudly, his face shifting.

"Derek, nephew, step away from the fragile human. You don't want to hurt anyone, especially him," another voice broke in. Stiles briefly recognized him as Derek's uncle, Peter.

"Someone had their hands on him!" Derek growled. "I will have my answers."

"Stiles, maybe it's best if you went home," Peter said softly to the trembling human who had pushed himself tightly into the corner of the swing. He stepped between Derek and Stiles hoping it didn't end his life. It wasn't smart to get between a possessive wolf and his mate especially if they felt like their territory had been breached.

"I'm sorry," Stiles got out as he crept off the porch and ran to his jeep. He didn't know why Theo sniffing and licking at him had brought out such a violent reaction in the alpha. Maybe because he wasn't in the pack? There was no way to tell, not now at least. He sped out of the driveway, something in him feeling broken that Derek had been so angry at him.

Meanwhile on the porch, Derek fought to gain control of himself. "Fuck!" he knew he was half shifted and knew the only thing that could calm him, other than killing the shifter who'd dared to touch his mate, was to go for a run. He let the fire of his wolf take him over and two seconds later he was running into the forest, letting his wolf run his frustrations out.

It wasn't until night had fallen that the truth came out. Boyd had talked with Erica who had seen Theo Raeken being escorted around school by Stiles.

["It's the only possible answer for why Stiles had a strange scent on him. You've met Raeken, you'd recognize his scent," Boyd told Derek.]

"It's gotta be him. You said the scent was washed out. Raeken's the only wolf not in our pack or a neighboring pack," Boyd told Derek.

Derek was finally calm and sent Scott to talk to his mate and let him know that it was because Stiles had smelled of someone not in his pack that his wolf went crazy. He would explain more when Stiles came

over the next day, but he couldn't let his mate think he had done been at fault. Scott had texted soon after saying Stiles was still a bit freaked out but that he understood.

"You need to watch that fucker and let me know if he bothers Stiles| anyone," Derek said. Boyd gave him a look clearly asking if he thought Boyd was as stupid as he was.

"When are you going to claim him, alpha?" Boyd asked straight out.

"He's notâ€|"

"Alphaâ€| Derek. I know you have issues or whatever, but I'm not stupid and neither is anyone else in the pack. We all know he is yours. You've never been as happy as you have been this past week with him here every day. We all want this for you. And if Raeken is marking Stiles, well, it might be best if you make a move now," Boyd said. He had never been as forward with his alpha as he was now, but he wanted him to be happy. There was no reason to beat around the bush when that happiness was at risk.

"Keep an eye on him. Please. I'm almost there, I just need a little more time," Derek said, looking tired.

"No problem, alpha. I won't let anything happen to him," Boyd promised.

"Thank you," Derek said, resting his hand on the back of his beta's neck and squeezing gently. It was a move that brought comfort and warmth to a shifter, reminding them of being a cub, being cared for.

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Stiles felt better after Scott left that night. He may have had a panic attack (or two) after leaving the pack house. He'd gone there for comfort and ended up fearing for his life and wondering what the hell he'd done wrong. But learning that Derek was reacting to the smell of another wolf on someone he considered part of his pack actually made him feel good, cared for in a way he'd never experienced before.

And if he had some fun Stiles Time that night to the thought of Derek going wolfy on him, being territorial towards him, well, that was his business alone. Nobody was around to hear him promising Derek that he belonged to him and only him.

Other than the shifter sitting outside his window. _So, Stiles saw himself as the alpha's bitch, huh? Well, we couldn't have that, now could we. What better way to piss off an alpha than to take something that belonged to him? Maybe he should've made his move when he'd had the opportunity. Now the alpha's chance was gone. _An arrogant smirk crossed his face as the shifter leapt to the ground, ready to put his plan into action. _This was going to be fun._

4. Chapter 4

**Thank you for all the reviews, you guys are the best. The next

chapter will be out by tomorrow.**

Warning for non-con touchingâ€|

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Stiles lost himself in the days that followed. He didn't feel safe, no matter where he was or who he was with. Theo was determined to make his life hell and it was working. Every chance he got, Theo was there. He tried to make sure he was with someone at all times and it helped a little. But even when Erica and Boyd were walking with him to class or Scott was waiting for him while he switched out his books at his locker, he would feel those eyes. He'd look over and there he was, leaning lazily against a wall or planted firmly in the middle of a hallway, his arms crossed threateningly. Those eyes were always pinned on Stiles, watching every move, calculating some plan in his mind. And that smirk. No matter the where, when, or how, Theo always had that fucking smirk on his face. Stiles swore he wanted to take the Bite just so he could claw that god damn smirk off his smirky little face. His threats were somewhat frightening, his presence intimidating, but that smirk, that teeny little smile that just screamed that he had a plan for Stiles, made him downright homicidal.

During Biology on Monday, he tried to wait to use the bathroom so he could have Scott go with him (what? Some dudes went to the bathroom at the same time!), but he got so fidgety the teacher called him out on it. He got a pass and went to the bathroom. Looking at the urinals, he knew it wasn't a wise decision, so he slipped into a stall to take care of business. It was ridiculous that even in this tiny cubicle, he didn't feel safe having his pants open. He felt exposed. Finishing as quickly as possible, he opened the door only to squeak as Theo stood there, smirking at him. Trying to stay calm, he slid past him and went to wash his hands.

Theo didn't say a word, just walked up behind him. Stiles caught his gaze in the mirror and saw his hazel eyes darken. He instantly felt nauseous when Theo stepped closer and rubbed a very obvious erection against his ass. _Wrong, wrong, wrong_! His spirit cried. _This isn't who we want!_ Stiles scooted away and ran from the bathroom, Theo's depraved chuckle following him as he ran down the hallway back to his class. He spent the rest of the afternoon trembling and jumping at every little sound.

Tuesday started off good. For some reason, his friends were stuck to him like glue and they were joined most times by others in the pack and more friends. He didn't mind, even if it seemed a little staged. Stiles sailed through the day, not letting himself look at Theo even once, though he knew the shifter was constantly nearby. When it came time for gym, Stiles eagerly participated in the free throw competition that Coach announced. He didn't do well, but cheered on his teammates as they each took their turns. Danny won by a landslide and Stiles gave him a high five as they went back to the locker room. Scott got called out to go to the office, giving Stiles a questioning glance as he left. He had no idea why his friend had to go, but he quickly figured it out.

Stiles always took a shower after gym since he hated to smell. So many shifters around meant sensitive noses and it only took one time in middle school when a shifter wrinkled their nose at him for being

stinky to make him take his hygiene seriously. Scott had just left so he went into the showers, sliding his towel on the half wall next to the showerhead he always used. While modesty wasn't an issue for the most part â€" shifters having such a big part in the human world helped them get over their body issues â€" you still kept your eyes to yourself while showering. It was polite. He finished up and shut the water off before turning around and reaching for his towel. Leaning there against the half wall, holding his towel, was Theo.

Immediately, Stiles knew this was a bad situation. Looking around, he didn't see any of his classmates and wondered what Theo had done to get them all to go away. His eyes returned to his tormentor and he decided his best option was to ignore him and get to his clothes so he could get the hell out of there. Striding past Theo, he yelped (in a manly kind of way) when the shifter grabbed his hand, halting his movement.

"Let go," Stiles said, trying to keep his voice calm. He knew Theo loved his fear, loved to know he was intimidated.

"Not quite yet. Damn, Stiles. You hide quite a lot under those jeans of yours, don't you?" Theo said, his smirk widening into a grin as he boldly took in Stiles' nude form.

"Get the hell away from me," he tried to yank his arm away to no avail.

Holding him firmly, Theo traced a hand down his back until he could grab a handful of Stiles' ass. "Oh yeah. I can't wait to fuck this tight little ass. You're a virgin, aren't you Stiles? You haven't had a cock in you yet. Well, we'll change that, won't we?" Theo's hand moved toward his crack, a finger reaching between his cheeks, getting closer to his hole.

"Coach!" Stiles yelled. "Hey Coach, can you come here?" His yell startled Theo enough to give him a second to jerk away. He hurried over to his clothes and jerked on his pants, not bothering with boxers.

"What's going on Stilinski?" Coach ambled into the locker room and paused when he saw Theo. His mouth tightened. Coach wasn't always the most 'with it' person, but he had a bad feeling about this kid. "Raeken, you don't have class right now, you shouldn't be in here."

"I was talking with Stiles," Theo said, trademark smirk back in place, though his eyes were glowing with anger as he pinned Stiles with his gaze.

"Don't care. Out!" Coach watched until Theo strode out of the room. "You okay kid?"

"Yeah," Stiles sighed, sinking down on the bench. "Thanks Coach."

"No problem, kid. Raeken is no good, you might want to stick with your friends," Coach said and returned to his office.

"I've been trying to," Stiles said to himself. Instead of heading to

his last class, he hopped in his jeep and went home, sending a text to Scott. He needed to be alone.

Once inside his house, he set the alarm and made sure all the windows were closed and curtains pulled and all doors were locked. Stripping again, he locked himself in the bathroom and showered, scrubbing his skin until it glowed red. He soaped and re-soaped his washcloth, cleaning his ass and what he could reach of his back until he finally started to feel like his body was his own again. Instead of hanging out in his boxers like he might normally do after a shower, he got fully dressed including shoes, socks and a hoodie that he pulled up and tied under his chin. Getting in bed, he burrito'd himself in his favorite blanket, realizing he was shaking the entire time. He took long, deep breaths, trying to control himself so he didn't break down into a panic attack.

He felt so wrong inside. He knew Theo had only looked at him and touched him, but he felt â€| violated. Lost inside himself, he didn't hear the front door unlock and the alarm disengage. Hearing his door open, he looked up with a gasp before collapsing in relief. "Scott."

"What happened?" Scott could smell something was wrong. "Nobody needed me at the office so I know something went down. Talk to me." He came and sat on the bed next to his best friend. He was shivering and Scott paused before laying down next to him, wrapping an arm loosely around his chest.

"Theo," Stiles whispered, his face turning bright red.

Scott growled. "What did he do?"

Stiles hesitated, but finally told him, leaving out the touching. Scott jumped from the bed and began growling and cursing as he paced back and forth. "We have to do something. Let's kill him. String him up, rip his fingernails off, or, or something."

Stiles grinned at his best friend, knowing he was the least violent person in the world and this was a way to show support to Stiles.

Within an hour, Scott had Stiles laughing and forgetting about his day, lost in the world of the Avengers and arguments over who was the most powerful and could take on Godzilla.

Wednesday, Stiles, with Scott's support, went to the principal who told him there was nothing they could do. Theo had reported that he was courting Stiles and he had the right to do so. It was up to Stiles to convey that he wasn't interested once Theo declared his intent to claim. It was unbelievably unfair, but that was how it was. This just didn't happen. Claimings were usually done between consenting people who liked each other, loved one another, and wanted to be together. To have an incompatible intended Claiming was nearly unheard of.

Leaving the principal's office, Stiles leaned against the wall. "What the hell do I do now?" He was literally helpless in this situation and he hated it. He contemplated stealing one of his dad's guns, but knew it wouldn't do any good. All the wolfsbane bullets were kept at the station.

"We need to make sure you aren't alone. We'll be like the secret service or something," he teased, knowing it would make his friend smile. "Come over to the pack house tonight. You haven't been there all week. Maybe we can talk to Derek about what is going on," Scott offered.

Stiles shook his head. The last thing he wanted was his current crush (love of his life, his heart supplied helpfully) to know he was a pathetic victim. "No, it's okay. Come on, let's get to class."

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"Derek, something needs to be done. Raeken is clearly stalking Stiles. He is showing up everywhere Stiles is, he grabs onto him. Stiles isn't himself anymore, he's more jumpy, and not in that funny way of his. I think he is actually scared," Boyd reported on Thursday. It had been a long week and he knew his alpha was fighting with himself on something regarding his intended mate and he searched for the right words to shake him out of it. Stiles needed him.

"He's lost his sarcasm," Erica agreed quietly. She may be more confident but she didn't have a death wish in thinking she could tell the alpha what to do. "It's been less than a week, but this guy is straight up taking over Stiles' life. The principal refused to step in because Raeken reported that he is going to claim Stiles. But he can't be Stiles' mate, he just can't be. Mates make each other happy and Stiles is miserable. Please, alpha, help us." A frustrated tear streaked down her face.

Derek's claws dug into his palms. He had to end this. This was his mate, not that pussy shifter's. "I need you to become Stiles' shadow, Boyd. Get Isaac to help you. I will have the twins trail him once he is outside of school. If you need to miss school to get him from class to class, that is what you will do. This is a priority. I can talk to the principal and make it a pack issue." He took a deep breath and looked at the small group around him. Boyd and Erica had skipped an afternoon class to come to him with the news and he had called in Peter to listen and advise, while Deaton was there for wisdom and any magical offensive they may need.

"I can help there as well, if it becomes necessary. We might need to get the sheriff involved. He should probably be notified anyway," Deaton said.

"Why doesn't he already know?" Peter wondered.

Erica lifted her hand. "Easy, Stiles is always worried about his dad and his health and doesn't like to be a bother. He knows his dad is busy and doesn't want to create more work for him. He's always convinced he can handle things on his own. That's why he hasn't come to any of us," Erica said, having gotten to know Stiles over the last couple of weeks. He was pretty easy to read and it was obvious he loved his father and put his needs above Stiles' own.

Derek took the plunge. His mate's needs were more important than his pathetic insecurities. "Stiles is my mate and I will claim him," Derek announced firmly, a low growl escaping him.

The small group clapped and whistled their joy for their alpha. Peter

grabbed his shoulder and squeezed it.

"I'm proud of you nephew. I will do whatever it takes to help you get through this," Peter promised him.

Derek smiled weakly. "Thanks everyone. While I would like nothing more than to run to him now and claim him, Stiles deserves better. I don't ever want him to wonder about how I feel about him or worry that I only claimed him to get him away from Raeken. If I can get your guys help for a week, I can get closer to him, let him know how I feel and what my intentions are. He deserves to be courted and I need your help to do that." He hated asking for help, hated it. But he couldn't follow Stiles around at school, it was a simple fact.

"You know we have your back, alpha. Between me and Scott, we can get him safely to school, to each class, and to practice. The twins have him after school until you can court him. We will give you your week, alpha, you will have the Claiming you both deserve," Boyd swore.

Derek's eyes glowed red at his beloved pack mates. "Thank you," he said and bowed his head at them.

It was considered an honor to receive a head bow and Boyd fought to keep his composure. His alpha had saved his life and he would do anything for him in return.

They began talking about things Stiles liked to do, ways that Derek could court him, places they could go. Erica was a fount of information, offering ideas that Stiles would love and things that would surprise him in good ways.

Boyd's phone beeped, announcing a text. It was from Scott. _911, can't get to Stiles_, _Theo got him at locker, please help him._

"Derek, here's your chance to help your mate," Boyd said with a growl and handed him the phone.

Derek barely took in the words before he was running out of the house, stripping, and shifting as he leapt from the porch on two legs and landed on four. He immediately ran for the school. He couldn't hurt Theo because wasn't in his pack and he wasn't 18 yet, but he could scare the hell out of the fucker. He approached the school via the field. There was a shed there that the pack provided for the shifters. It opened by a security code and contained clothes, general first aid items, and other things shifters might need after shifting. He grabbed the first clothes he found, jeans and a t-shirt, and followed his nose to his mate, up a floor, down a hallway and around a corner. The sight before him nearly broke his heart.

5. Chapter 5

****Warning for a bit more non-con touching at the beginning of the chapter. Then our favorite guys ... well, I'll just let you read it for yourself. ;)****

****I edited this chapter so many times my eyes blurred, but something**

still feels off, so kind words only please!**

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"Hello Stiles," the voice came from behind him and it sent a shiver through him that felt slimy and wrong. Where the hell was Scott?

"Hey," he responded without turning around as he gathered books from his locker and returned those he no longer needed.

Hands ran possessively over his hips before grasping on too tightly, so tightly Stiles knew he would have bruises. A body crowded behind him, something rigid and hard pressing against the curve of his ass. He didn't let himself think about the implications of what that meant. Not again.

"Aren't you going to turn around and talk to me?"

Stiles jerked his body until the hands let go, though that earned him a quiet groan from the aggressor. It disturbed him beyond belief that Theo was turned on when all he wanted to do was vomit and run screaming to Scott or Derek. "Can't. I'm already late for class." Maybe if he was rude the guy would get the point. Not likely. "And please stop grabbing onto me. I've told you many times now, I don't like it."

Theo breathed heavily near his ear, his breath smelling like copper and salt. Blood? "If you gave me a chance, I think you'd start to like it quite a bit. You smell good, Stiles. Want to know what you smell like?"

"Not really," Stiles grabbed out his phone and quickly texted Scott. _911 locker now help_.

"You smell like mine," Theo whispered.

Stiles felt the shifter shuffle in close behind him again and then his tongue swiped up his neck, again. He tried to control the trembling that started coursing through his body. This felt wrong, so very wrong. And it just. Kept. Happening.

Stiles had enough. He slammed his locker closed and turned around. The open lust and possession in Theo's piercing hazel eyes was disturbing. His erection was obscene and almost like an assault just being there. Stiles gathered his courage and threw his backpack over his shoulder.

"Look, Theo, I don't understand why you aren't getting this. I do not like you, I don't want you. I don't want to be your mate, boyfriend, friend or hell, even your Facebook friend! You creep me out and I want you to stay the hell away from me, do you understand me?" Stiles kept his voice as firm as possible, hoping that he was able to get his point across. _Scott, where the hell are you?_

Theo stared at him, the ever-present smirk playing across his lips. "So, you want to play hard to get? I can go with that, sweetheart. But I know what my wolf tells me. And my wolf and I agree that you belong to us. We will claim you and we'll do it soon. Be ready," he ended in a whisper, his hand coming up and cupping Stiles chin. As he

continued to stare, his hand grew tighter around Stiles' jaw, his fingers pushing harder until Stiles realized it was his claws that were beginning to sink into Stiles' skin. A whimper escaped him as he felt his skin break. "I love that sound, Stiles. You don't know what it does to me. Mmm," Theo rubbed his face against Stiles'. "You don't want to deny my wolf, Stiles. It won't be pretty." His claws dug a little deeper in before scraping across Stiles chin as he pulled his hand back, the claws disappearing into his fingers. He could detect the faint feeling of blood dripping down his jaw.

Stiles stood there in shock as Theo sauntered off. As soon as he turned the corner, Stiles collapsed to the ground, his body sending him straight into a panic attack. Tingles and numbness crept up from his fingers and toes in the familiar tendrils of panic. His heart pounded, his sight grew dim, the room seemed to swirl around him. Tremors shook him as he tried to make his heart calm, but the galloping beat just seemed to get faster, carrying him away to a place filled with fear and dread, and he was lost. Alone. He would always be alone. Never safe again. He would die alone.

"Stiles?" The voice sounded far away. "Stiles, it's Derek. You're safe now, sweet boy. I need you to look at me okay?"

Stiles heard the voice, he knew it and wanted to see who was speaking. The speaker was safe. The person saying these words would protect him and make things okay.

"Come on, sweet, take a deep breath. Good job, hold it for the count of three; one, two, three. Okay, now release for three; one, two, three. Let's do it again, you're doing wonderful. I'm so proud of you," the voice praised.

The words felt so warm, so sweet. He wanted to make the voice happy. He matched his breathing to the words, over and over, it seemed to take forever. Eventually, he could feel his extremities again and his heart began slowing.

He opened his eyes and there he was, his protector, the one who brought him back from being lost. Derek. Green eyes met his, worry shining there as well as affection?

"Derek," he whispered hoarsely, relief at his presence filling him up.

Derek sighed in relief. He was starting to worry he would need to take Stiles to the hospital, it took him nearly fifteen minutes to bring him back. He was bleeding, the claw marks in his jaw reeking of Raeken. It was only the need to help Stiles out of his panic attack that kept him from hunting him down and killing him. To touch his mate, to hurt his mate, was to sign his own death warrant. And Derek would collect.

"Hi Stiles," Derek gave him a soft smile. He took his shirt off and dabbed at Stiles jaw, gaining a wince from his mate. "Would you feel okay coming back to the house?"

Stiles nodded quickly, his head pounding at the motion causing him to moan.

"Take it easy, now. Come on, let's get out of here." Derek stood and

put his arm around Stiles waist and helping him up. He took note of another wince when he touched his hips and again had to control his fury. Instead he concentrated on aiding his mate. Deep down, his wolf and he celebrated having their mate in his arms. It felt goodâ€|right.

Derek guided him slowly and gently out of the building and to Stiles' jeep. He helped his mate into the vehicle, accepting the keys and making a solemn promise to be nice to his baby.

"You break my car, I break your gorgeous face. Oh god, I can't believe I just said that," Stiles moaned, putting his face in his hands. He wished his brain would hurry up and get back on line. "I blame anything I say on the panic attack. Tomorrow I'll come up with a different excuse."

Derek smiled. "I don't mind."

"Of course you don't, you didn't just embarrass yourself," Stiles said, giving him a mock scowl.

The alpha chuckled. "Want me to embarrass myself?"

Stiles grinned. "Hell yeah, fess up to something." He liked this more open side of the alpha. The easy smiles and laugh were something to behold. And drool over.

"I think you are beautiful," Derek stated calmly, though Stiles noticed the tips of his ears turned pink.

Stiles' heart stopped for a moment before beginning to pound in response to the words. "I said embarrass yourself, not lie, blushy-wolf," Stiles said quietly. He couldn't believe this other-worldly creature could possibly find him attractive.

Derek pulled the jeep off to the side of the road and turned to look at him. He reached over and gently took Stiles' hand and held it to his chest. Stiles' breath caught at the feel of hard, hot muscle under his hand.

"Feel my heart, Stiles, hear my truth. I find you extremely beautiful. I always have." His voice was so sincere and though Stiles could feel Derek's heart race under his hand, there were no skips that he could detect with his lousy human senses. Derek was speaking the truth. What kind of alternate universe was this?

"Well then," Stiles said, knowing his come-back was lame.

"Exactly," Derek replied, grinning at him and pulling back out onto the road.

The rest of the ride to the house was quiet, though it wasn't uncomfortable. There were not-so subtle glances at the other every so often, small smiles, even a happy sigh from Stiles. He'd never had someone be attracted to himâ€| Well, someone that wasn't insane and creepy anyway.

They arrived at the house and Derek escorted Stiles into his office after stopping by the bathroom for the first aid kit. It was more his sanctuary than just an office. He had a desk and chair, but there was

also a love seat, several arm chairs, a table and books. Lots of books. He had a lovely view of the forest through the large bay window that had a cushioned window seat. It was a place of rest and relaxation for him as much as it was a place to take care of pack business. His pack knew they were always welcome to come in, talk to him, ask for advice or talk about problems. It was a place to comfort his pack and himself. And now his mate.

He opened the first aid kit and gently cleansed Stiles's face. "Does it hurt?"

"A little, mostly it just aches," Stiles said quietly.

"Stiles, look at me."

Stiles looked into his green eyes that conveyed concern and true caring.

"Is there anywhere else he hurt you?" Derek prayed there wasn't.

"No, I'm a little sore 'cause he pushed against me, but I'm fine," Stiles assured him. His hips were going to bruise but there was no way he was going to show Derek and talking about mental harm was a completely different issue. He was feeling more with it and he still couldn't believe he'd told Derek he was gorgeous. But Derek's response was probably the biggest shock. He knew he was attracted to the older wolf, he would never have assumed the attraction was mutual.

Derek studied him and knew there was more to it, but he wouldn't question him now. There was time to build up trust. "Is there anything I can get for you or do for you? Do you want to call your dad?"

Stiles shook his head emphatically. "No. He's way too stressed out. I'm fine. But, um, I feel pretty disgusting. Is there a chance I could take a shower?"

"Absolutely, come on," Derek said. He knew there were guest rooms and guest bathrooms. Did he take Stiles to one of those? No. He took Stiles to the master suite. His personal den. His mate was entering their room (well, soon to be) for the first time. The room was large, featuring a king size bed with a black leather head and foot board. There were matching chairs near the window. He could see Stiles taking it all in with awe in his beautiful eyes. He may have puffed up a bit with pride, but thankfully his mate didn't notice.

Derek opened the door to the bathroom and Stiles let out a small gasp. Derek grinned.

"Derek, I'm sorry, but I'm in love with your shower. If you'll leave now, we're going to indulge in a torrid affair," Stiles stated, going to the large glassed in shower. The stall was large enough for two or three people with two shower heads and four jets lower down.

Derek chuckled, loving his reaction. "How would you feel if I said it had a touch screen control?"

Stiles' jaw dropped. "I may embarrass myself," he chuckled.

"No embarrassment needed. I've enjoyed plenty of time in this shower." Stiles' head jerked toward him, but Derek just smiled and didn't explain what he meant. "It's really easy to operate and there are towels on the warmer over there. Take your time. Let me grab some clothes for you real quick and I'll leave you to it."

"Awesome," Stiles said, still lost in checking out the shower.

Derek grabbed a pair of his own sweats and a t-shirt. He knew the pants would be too big, but the drawstring would help. There was no way in hell he was letting his mate wear anyone else's clothes but his. He gratefully located a new pack of boxer briefs and bit down on his lip to contain the moan knowing this little piece of fabric would be touching his mate intimately.

"Here you go," he said, holding them out.

Stiles purposely let his fingers glide across Derek's as he took the small pile of clothes. He made eye contact with the alpha. "Thank you, Derek. For everything. I know this is way beyond the call of duty as an alpha, especially as I'm not in your pack. What you did for me today was what a true friend does, and for that I thank you." Stiles cleared his throat as he fought the emotions bubbling up. He had to stop before he embarrassed himself further. "Now shoo, I need to enjoy this shower." Not his usual clever repartee, but it did the trick as Derek whispered a faint "You're welcome" and closed the door.

Derek stood outside the bathroom, his jaw still dropped and his heart pounding in his chest. How long had it been since someone had seen him as more than just an alpha? A true friend, Stiles had said. That meant more to him than Stiles being physically attracted to him. He knew they'd found things in common over the short time they'd spent socializing and felt they were on their way to being friends. But for Stiles to see him as a true friend was justâ€¦ amazing. A gift.

"Derek."

Derek's head swung toward the bathroom door. He'd been standing there longer than he realized. Then he took in a deep breath and moaned out loud. Holy fucking shit. If what Stiles said wasn't enough of a gift, his mate pleasuring himself in Derek's shower, whispering his name was unreal. His cock grew hard in seconds. Taking in another nose-full of warm shower air, he scented Stiles pre-come. He knew it was wrong to stand there and listen and also knew if he stayed he was going to join his mate in the shower, so he quickly made his way to the first spare bathroom he could find. The scent of Stiles was still in his nose as he took his cock in his hand and started pumping. True friendâ€¦ gorgeous â€¦ thank you â€¦ alpha â€¦ friend â€¦ Thoughts of his mate's words mixed with his tantalizing scent all proved too much and in an embarrassingly short time, he came with a guttural groan into his hand. He was dizzy he'd come so hard and he sat down on the edge of the tub, breathing heavily. He couldn't wait until he could share the experience with his mate, preferably locked deep inside him. Enough! He knew if he continued down that line of thought, he'd be stuck in the bathroom even longer. What he needed to do was clean up and go make his mate something to eat. He'd had a hard afternoon and needed to replenish his strength. Stiles

appreciated good food and Derek could whip up a couple of steaks in no time at all. Caring for all of his needs made him and his wolf very happy. What had been a horrible incident was turning into the best day he'd had in a long time.

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Stiles made his way down to the kitchen where his nose told him food was being prepared. He hoped there was enough for him. Hopefully Derek hadn't heard or smelled his Stiles Time (trademark pending). Between the panic attack, the glorious shower, and the equally glorious Derek, he'd needed a release. It was wonderful and he regretted nothing. He knew from Scott that shifters ignored stuff like that. Just because they could smell it didn't mean they had the right to put their nose in someone else's business. Pun completely intended.

Reaching the kitchen, he saw Derek grilling steaks on the barbeque outside the slider door. He grabbed a plastic bag to put his clothes in (something inside him was thrilled that he knew his way around the kitchen and the rest of the pack house so well) and went out on the deck. There were two places set at the picnic bench, two bowls of salad in place, glasses of juice poured.

"Take a seat, the steaks are almost done," Derek said, flashing that small smile that Stiles loved.

"Dude, you are seriously amazing. I am starving," Stiles groaned, sitting down and taking a drink of juice. He missed Derek's jaw clenching at the sound he made.

"I figured you would be. I know panic attacks can really take it out of you."

"Understatement," Stiles agreed.

Derek served up the steaks and they dug in. The silence was comfortable, both hungry and not needing any conversation. Once Stiles had scarfed down his food, Derek knew he was feeling better. He started talking about the last lacrosse game and his hands began flailing as he illustrated different points. Derek was enjoying listening to his mate, getting lost in his voice when he heard Stiles mention the game when Scott claimed Allison. Derek had been there and had seen his mate close his eyes. He'd thought it was adorable.

"Was that the oddest place you've seen a Claiming?" It was sneaky, he knew. He'd had some ideas of where to claim Stiles, but the chance to hear his mate's opinion was extremely valuable.

"Are you kidding me? No way! We're talking the swings at the park, the 7-11 downtown and my personal favorite: Hot Dog on a Stick at the mall," Stiles said, munching on some a slice of apple from the plate of fruit Derek had produced for dessert.

He wondered if his mate thought of this as a date like he did. The courting had begun. "You're kidding me? The corn dog place?" Seeing Stiles nod and grin, he had to laugh. "That's insane and disgusting. I've seen the mall as well, of course. The mattress store was unimaginative if you ask me. There was an elevator once and an escalatorâ€¦ that one had injuries." He loved hearing his mate laugh.

The sad part was, he wasn't making this up. "Then there was a craft show my sister made me go to and the movie theaterâ€¦ that was a shy couple which I thought was pretty perfect for them."

Stiles nodded. "Public and private at the same time. Brilliant. I'd probably go for the field like Scott. I have so many good memories there. Anywhere in nature really, but since it's gotta be public, the field is a good choice. What about you? Where is your ultimate place?"

Derek coughed on his bite of watermelon. He hadn't thought Stiles would ask him that. "Um, probably somewhere in nature. But like you said, it's hard to deal with the public part of the issue."

"Is the public part really that important to shifters? I know what Scott said, but he wasn't born. Is it different for you?" Stiles had always been curious, but it wasn't something you could ask just anyone.

Hearing his mate's sincerity, Derek answered just as seriously. "It really is. The taking of a mate is almost more important to our animal than it is to the human side. It is a statement to the world that we have chosen this person," he told him, keeping eye contact with him. "We have picked this person and made them ours. This person is no longer available to mate nor is he vulnerable anymore. This person will be protected and defended for the rest of their life, to the dying breath of the wolf." Derek hadn't intended to make it sound like a vow, but it turned out that way anyway.

Stiles mouth was dry and he couldn't seem to look away from the intense green of Derek's eyes.

"Stiles!" Scott's voice yelled somewhere in the house.

Jumping, Stiles called to his friend. "On the deck, Scotty." He and Derek shared a small smile and Stiles knew everything would be okay, the serious conversation wouldn't become weird between them. Their date had been a success. Wait. Date? Stiles thought back over the afternoon, the meal, their conversation, the closeness between them. It really could have been a date. He felt his face burn, knowing it was just his wishful thinking. Then Derek smiled at him and winked, reaching over and squeezing his hand. What the hell did that mean?

Scott rushed onto the deck and grabbed Stiles by the shoulders, looking him over. Derek moved quietly into the kitchen to let the friends have a moment.

"The bastard hurt you," Scott growled, gently inspecting Stiles face.

"I'm all good, Scott, don't go all vengeance-wolf on him. It'll be okay. I just have to stay away from the psycho," Stiles said.

Derek rejoined them. "Scott, where were you during all of this?" He was holding off on the anger already boiling up under his skin.

Scott explained how he was on the way home and had been waylaid by Matt Daehler â€" another conveniently new student â€" while Theo had

gone after Stiles. The other wolf had talked about joining Theo's pack and tried to get Scott to leave Derek's pack and join up with him. Instead Scott promised him a broken jaw if he dared insult him or his alpha like that again.

Derek couldn't help the deep pride that flashed through him at the loyalty of his packmate. At the same time, the thought of another shifter trying to steal away one of his packmates made him want to howl and rip the asshole's face off. Theo had finally found someone to join up with him and that just meant trouble.

He walked up to Scott and squeezed the back of his neck. "Good job, pup. I'm proud of you." Scott flushed with pride. He turned to Stiles. "Boyd is going to be making sure you make it to each class safely, Stiles. Scott, you need to check with him and cover any times he isn't available," he instructed. Scott nodded seriously.

Stiles was shocked, in a good way, but he knew he had to protest. "Derek, that isn't necessary."

Derek gave his mate a stern look. "It is very necessary. He touched you with violence, Stiles. He intends to claim you. Is that something you want?"

Stiles shuddered. "No, of course not, but—"

"No buts. Boyd offered to help and I'm sure Scott doesn't have a problem helping."

"Not at all. It's just like what we've been trying to do, but with more help, Stiles. Don't try to fight it," Scott insisted.

"I just don't want to put people out," Stiles mumbled.

"Would you help your friend if this happened to them?"

Stiles looked at Derek. "Of course I would."

"But it would put you out right? You'd be irritated having to put forth time and effort to help them?" Derek hated playing Devil's advocate, but his mate had to see the truth.

"Of course not!" Stiles was offended he'd even ask. Then he frowned. "Not nice, alpha. I get it. It doesn't mean I have to like it."

"Nobody has to like it, but take the help and keep yourself safe. Let us help you."

Stiles looked at Scott then Derek. They both looked so stinking sincere. Ugh. He hated being the center of attention. "Okay. Thank you."

Scott grinned. "That hurt didn't it?"

"Worse than an atomic wedgie," Stiles admitted bitterly.

"As long as it keeps you safe," Derek said. He met his mate's eyes and smiled softly at him. He adored the warm blush on his face. His mate was perfect and soon would be all his. Forever.

6. Chapter 6

****Courting beginsâ€| Confessions occurâ€|****

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Stiles had no problem with Theo on Friday. He knew to expect Boyd and Scott at the door of each of his classes, escorting him to the next one. He hated it. Hated every second of it, knowing he did indeed need his friends to help him out because physically, he couldn't defend himself. On the other side of hating it, he felt loved. Shut up, it's the bro kind of love. Boyd wasn't as much of a bro as Scott and he knew the muscle-bound shifter was doing it mostly because Derek told him to, but he didn't make Stiles feel bad about it. In fact, he let go of his typical stoic stance (say that ten times fast) and joked around with Stiles. Yes, his eyes were darting around as they walked, but Stiles never felt like the pain in the ass he was sure he was. Scott was just Scott. They talked about what videogames they wanted to play and what Scott might be doing with Allison that night. (Not that, come on, get your minds out of the gutter!) Normal stuff.

They did see Theo on several occasions. The first few times, Theo smiled, knowing Stiles was being escorted and it wasn't a coincidence that Stiles wasn't alone. By lunch time, however, Theo knew there was no chance of getting to Stiles and his smirk turned to sneers and growls. Boyd told him the growls were threats telling him and Scott to back off. Of course they wouldn't, but he was trying to scare them away.

"Boyd can I ask a question about born shifters?" Stiles asked on the way from lunch to trigonometry.

"Sure," the big man said, looking back over their shoulders, a dark look on his face. He took Stiles by the arm and pushed him a little faster toward the building they needed.

Stiles was silent until Boyd relaxed. "Can a human be the mate of more than one shifter?" He couldn't forget the look in Derek's eyes, the gentle treatment, being called 'sweet boy' as he fought the panic. The meal, conversation, and when Scott showed up that wink and hand squeeze. That couldn't have been a coincidence, could it? He'd never seen or heard of Derek acting like that with someone else. During their talk about Claiming locations, Derek had been light hearted, but his eyes had been so intense. Could it be real? Could he be Derek's mate? Everything in him was singing, no screaming for the alpha. But if Theo saw him as his mate, was Stiles wrong in how he was feeling? Obviously he wouldn't take Theo as a mate, the guy was nut-fuck crazy. But if that was his mate, his soulmate as humans saw it, then why did he feel so strongly for Derek?

Boyd stopped walking and for the first time that day looked him straight in the eyes. "No, Stiles, a human would never have two compatible mates." He was really enjoying getting to know the human who seemed to have no control over his flailing limbs. His Erica sure cared for him and finding out how much Stiles had helped her before he'd met her made him open to a friendship with the kid. They were the same age, but for some reason, his innocence gave Stiles the aura

of a younger person. He was also his alpha's mate. He knew this and there was no way in hell he could tell Stiles this. He'd be de-balled by Erica and beat down by Derek. The first made him nauseous, the second made him recoil in horror.

Not many had seen his alpha go full rage. He had. Soon after he'd joined the pack, the alpha had went through a bad period dealing with grief and he got violent a couple of times, taking it out on the forest and the gym they built. It wasn't pretty. The thought of facing that anger just because he wanted to comfort Stiles and share the truth with him, was a very good deterrent. But he did want to comfort him. How to do it without giving away the ending? "Don't worry, Stiles. We've got you." That was all he could come up with.

Stiles gave him a weak smile. "I know. Thanks man."

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After school, Stiles expected to see the twins as Boyd had told him, but instead Derek stood there by his jeep.

"Hey Derek," he said hesitantly.

Derek flashed his small smile at him in greeting. "Hi Stiles. The twins got called in to work so I thought we'd hang out until your dad got home from work. What do you think?"

What did he think? Stiles was barely holding himself down on the earth. He wanted to jump up and down, thanking anyone who would listen. Spend more time with Derek? Hells yeah!

"Sounds good to me," he said calmly.

Derek grinned. His mate's eyes were sparkling, his scent filled with joy and excitement. "Excellent. Feel like driving?"

Stiles agreed and they hopped into the jeep. He started her up and asked her with all his might that she behave and not break down at any point during their time together today. If Baby felt the need to break down, he prayed it would be some other day. "Where to?"

"Just head towards the highway, I'll direct you," Derek said.

On the way, they discussed Stiles' childhood. Derek asked leading questions that dug a lot deeper than Stiles thought they would. Before he knew it, he was talking about his mother's mental collapse at the end of her long illness. He talked about visiting Scott and Mrs. McCall in order to spend time with a maternal influence.

Derek shocked the shit out of him by opening up about his own family tragedy. Stiles knew, of course. Everyone in town knew. He talked about how hard it was to open up to anyone afterward, afraid that he would lose them. Rebuilding the pack was his goal and he stuck to it, though he'd kept his heart sealed up tight. It took Peter and Boyd to break through to him. They'd been attacked by a rogue hunter in another pack's territory. They'd traveled to talk to allies and the hunter had shot them both with wolfsbane. Derek had gone to bring them home after they'd been found and healed. The concept of losing them had been right in his face and he'd had to deal with it. His

heart had opened and welcomed them and he found himself able to care again.

"Seeing them so weak and knowing I'd almost lost them was like a slap in the face. I thought, what if they'd died? Would they know that I cared? They wouldn't have. So I let them know I cared in a very awkward moment that included hugging and the verbal promise to never speak of it again," Derek said with a chuckle.

Stiles laughed and nodded, bouncing in his seat a little. "I get it. I do. Scott and I have always been bros, but the few moments of letting each other know we care are few and far between and always include manly punches to the shoulder or gut."

"You have to keep your dignity somehow," Derek said with an approving nod.

"Word," Stiles said and held his fist out for Derek to bump, which he did with a raised brow. Stiles knew he was being judged by that brow. Derek was good at that. "Yes, I said 'word'. Deal with it."

Derek held his hands up in surrender. "I'm dealing," he said, his eyes twinkling merrily.

"Shut up," Stiles muttered, staring straight ahead.

"I'm giving you shit, Stiles. You know that right?" Derek didn't really want to upset his mate. He was only playing.

Stiles looked over and winked one whiskey eye at him. "I know. Gotcha!" he bounced and laughed loudly.

Derek wanted to bathe in his mate's mischievous joy, it was delicious to smell. "Ass," he said to keep it going.

"Yeah, I know I have a nice one," Stiles bragged, enjoying the playfulness of the usually quiet mannered alpha.

"I already knew that," Derek said darkly.

Stiles looked over at him and Derek looked him over, his expression openly appreciative. "Oh fuck," Stiles moaned, turning red. Stiles Jr. was trying to break through his jeans at that look. So fucking hot. Control, he demanded of himself.

Derek breathed deep of the lust and want his mate was radiating. Dear god, if this was what his lust was like, what would it be like when he finally claimed him and was buried deep inside him? Control, he told his body and wolf. It wasn't time yet. Soon. Very soon now. Derek cleared his throat. "Turn here," he said pointing.

A few minutes later, Derek directed him into the parking lot of a large warehouse. "No fucking way! I've been wanting to come to this place since it opened!" Funtasia was a huge 'fun center' that took up an entire block. Bumper cars, batting cages, arcades, bungees, go carts, miniature golf, adult sized bouncy houses, laser tag, basically anything you could think of that is fun, this place had it. Stiles hadn't wanted to go alone and with Scott being distant, he hadn't had an opportunity to go. "This is perfect!"

Derek grinned widely, Erica had been right. He'd had a feeling she would be, this seemed like the perfect place to take an active person who had ADHD. His mate was all lit up now and twitching in his seat. "Excellent. Let's go then."

Derek paid which Stiles tried to argue with but Derek's eyebrows put him in his place. They started with the go carts and went to the batting cages. Stiles could see how much fun Derek was having there, so they stayed for three sessions. Then they went and played laser tag, which Stiles won with good humor. Food was necessary after that much activity so they went and split a large pizza.

Derek hadn't thought he'd enjoy himself as much as he was. There was so much to do and Stiles was energetic and smiling; it pushed him to find just as much pleasure as Stiles was having. Laser tag was amazing, chasing his mate had brought his wolf to the fore and he'd had to hold himself back from Claiming him then and there. It was staggering, the push to claim. He hadn't felt it that strongly before. His wolf saw them chasing down their mate and wanted him NOW. He'd caught Stiles' unique scent and wanted to hunt down the source of that scent and he had a feeling it was hidden deep in those snug jeans that cupped his ass so sweetly. When Stiles suggested lunch, Derek was relieved. If they'd pursued a more physical activity, he wouldn't be able to guarantee his control over his wolf. Or his lust.

After eating, they made it through more of the bigger activities before ending their time in the arcade. They separated for a while to play different games, then came together to compete on race games and shooting games. Neither of them held back, they put their all into the competition. Derek won more of the racing ones as he had faster reflexes. Stiles shocked him in the shooter games with his dead on shooting; he had an eagle eye and Derek wondered what he'd be like as a shifter. Damn it, now his mind was picturing his mate as a wolf. Damn that would be hot. Come on, head back in the game.

In the end, they had won a nearly equal number of tickets. They went to the ticket counter and Derek traded in all of his for a fluffy wolf which he gave to Stiles with a big grin. Stiles made him turn around as he made his selection. When he tapped him on the shoulder, Stiles proudly presented him with a stuffed Batman that was nearly two feet tall. Derek broke into laughter and hugged Stiles to him. It was perfect.

Stiles cuddled into Derek and wanted to stay there forever. This had been the most perfect day ever. He couldn't even comprehend of a day better than this. Unless it was your Claiming with Derek, his mind told him. Well, okay then. But this was still the best day ever. That other thing may never happen. This was more than good enough for now.

If Stiles found that day perfect, the rest of the weekend vied to take that position. Derek showed up at his house Saturday and they spent the day together visiting random book stores. They had more in common than either of them knew and had read much of the same books. Derek confessed to a secret love of Harlequin romances as Stiles fessed up to enjoying the Sookie Stackhouse series (aka the True Blood book series). At the end of the day, Derek surprised Stiles with a first edition of The Hobbit. Stiles had seen it in the glass case of one of the second hand book stores and had admired it. He

didn't want to take it from Derek (well, he did, but you know, it was polite to say 'oh, that's too much' when all he really wanted to say was 'hell yes I want it!'), but his friend insisted. When they got back to Stiles' house, he saw his dad was home and brought Derek in. He ended up staying for a late dessert and seemed to have a good time chatting with his dad about sports and town news (aka gossip).

Sunday started awful. Stiles got up and went outside to drive to get donuts for him and his dad since he was so freaking happy lately. The tires on his jeep were slashed and the word "WHORE" was painted on his windshield. After his dad took down the details and made the report - there was no doubt in Stiles' mind that Theo was at fault here and he wouldn't get away with it - he started in on cleaning off that ugly word. His instincts told him to call Derek, so he did. Derek was curt on the phone, but he showed up quickly with a truck. He recognized Boyd's truck and sent him a quick thank you text. Derek growled when he saw the remains of the word still staining the window. Stiles was having a hard time getting it off. Derek suggested he take a break and help him put the new tires on. He stood there, mouth agape, as Derek unloaded the four brand new, high quality, top of the line, tires from the back of the truck.

"Derek, you really shouldn't have, seriously. I know how much those tires cost and it is way too much to spend on me," Stiles insisted. Those tires were all weather and cost nearly five hundred dollars EACH.

Derek stepped up to him and cupped his chin gently. "Let me do this for you," he said quietly.

Stiles was caught up in his gaze, his green eyes almost glowing in their intensity. "Okay," he whispered. Oh, crap, he thought, I'm in love with him.

The alpha smiled and caressed his jaw and cheek before stepping away and going to the back of the truck. Together they had the tires replaced in minutes. It's pretty handy to have an alpha wolf who can lift the jeep instead of using a jack on each tire. He then put his elbow grease into the paint on Stiles' windshield and within minutes the ugly word was gone and his jeep was good as new.

The sheriff had left to file the report - Derek had confirmed it was Theo's scent all over the jeep - so Derek and Stiles went inside when they were done with the jeep. After cleaning up they sat down to watch a movie.

Finally, Stiles couldn't take it anymore. The waiting and wondering was killing him. It was now or never. He had to know. Praying to anything that was listening, he paused the movie causing Derek to look at him questioningly. They were sitting on the couch together, their sides plastered together shoulder to thigh.

Stiles looked down at his hands resting on his lap, his fingers twisting and untwisting in fear. "I'm, um, not going to look at you as I ask this, so let me get this out, ok?"

Derek turned so he was facing Stiles, his stomach in sudden knots. His mate smelled of sour anxiety, fear, and an almost desperate hope. He had a sudden feeling he knew what was going on.

"Derek, we've been spending a lot of time together lately. Honestly, it's been the best times I've ever had in my life. I've never had this much fun and I'm a little confused. I know you're a pretty private person and you love your pack. I guess I don't understand why you're spending so much time with me. What is this?" Please love me, he prayed.

The alpha swallowed heavily. This was it. He couldn't let his mate live like this, he could feel the waves of emotion coming from him. He had to do this. "You're right, I don't do this. I've been doing a lot of things I don't normally do. Things I've never done, in fact. And there is a reason," he said. Stiles finally looked at him, desperate hope shining in his beautiful whiskey eyes. Derek kept his gaze as he took the plunge. "I'm courting you, Stiles. You're my mate."

Stiles gasped. Okay, Stiles, think. "Please don't say it just because you can feel how much I want this. Please don't, I couldn't take it." He had to be sure.

Derek took Stiles' trembling hands in his. "I'm saying this because it's true. You are my mate. I've known you were my mate since you were fifteen."

Stiles face was alight with joy then confusion clouded his eyes. "Then why didn't I know before this?"

Derek shook his head. "I was dealing with a lot of fear, sweet boy. I was so afraid that I wasn't good enough for you. I needed to know that I was strong enough to protect you and take care of you. I kept thinking I needed to do more. Get the pack grown and then settled, get the pack house just right, then I had to get the treaties with our allies cemented. I kept working when all I really needed and wanted to do was court you and make you mine. I'm so sorry I waited so long, Stiles," he said, his tone firm and sure. He took Stiles' hands in his. "But please know, I love you so very much. You are my mate and I will make you mine." He held his breath as he waited for Stiles' reaction.

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Funtasia is a real place, they've since changed the name, but it's a seriously fun place. I hope you enjoyed this chapter.

I just completed Camp NaNoWriMo, I wrote 50,000 words this month. (11,000 words written today!) I now have ten completed chapters for this story and three chapters of a new story started. WOOT!

The new story includes an Alpha who wants to kidnap his mate, the town's Spark, and claim him...

7. Chapter 7

"â€|I'm so sorry I waited so long, Stiles. But please know, I love you so very much. You are my mate and I will make you mine." He held his breath as he waited for Stiles' reaction.

Stiles gaped at him. This was exactly what he'd longed to hear. Come

on, brain, function! "I love you too," he finally rasped out.

Derek sighed and then grinned and cupped his face. "I'm going to kiss you now," he told him softly.

Stiles nodded dumbly. "Okay."

Gently clasping Stiles' head in his hands, he tilted his head and brought their lips together. Stiles' lips were soft and full and molded to Derek's like they were made to do it. It was like coming home. Their lips moved softly against each other, learning, tasting, exploring. Derek opened his mouth against Stiles', encouraging his mate to do the same. He knew Stiles was new to kissing, so he took it slow. Stiles opened to him and he slipped just the tip of his tongue against his lips and inside that delicious cavern. They both moaned and just like that, the spell was broken. At the sound of his mate's pleasure, Derek stopped holding back and swept his tongue into his mate's mouth, swallowing his whimper and eagerly learning his taste. Stiles delighted him by pushing back against his tongue, making his way into Derek's mouth, exploring the new sensations.

Derek trailed his fingers down Stiles jaw to his neck, taking in the silky feel of his skin. Stiles shivered under him and he growled lowly. His mate was so damn _responsive_ he wanted to howl his delight and mark him from head to toe. His cock punched against the inside of his pants at the thought of seeing his mark on his mate's body. Slow down, he reminded himself. Baby steps. His mate was innocentâ€¦| deliciously innocent. _Oh dear god_.

Stiles couldn't believe how amazing kissing was. He felt like he was drowning in the emotions and desire that was coursing through him. Vulnerable yet powerful. Wanted and hungry. His head spun as he tasted the inside of Derek's mouth, delighting in the warm scent of him in his nose and the firm heat of him beneath his hands. It was perfect. Derek was perfect.

Derek's mouth traveled from his mouth to his jaw, licking, nipping and kissing his way along the bone to his ear. Stiles shivered under the delicious sensations, whimpering when Derek hummed in his ear before suckling on his earlobe.

"Oh dear god, my earlobe is a sexy spot. Why the fuck didn't anyone tell me?" Stiles gasped out. Damn it, he needed to filter better. "More, more, please more sexy-wolf." Oh shit, he said that out loud too.

Derek chuckled lightly as he sucked a bit harder on his lobe before making his way down his neck, tracing the long length with his tongue. "You're delicious, my mate," he whispered.

"Yummy Stiles, that's me. Yummy in your tummy. Oh fuck, I need to shut up," he whimpered.

"Never, love. I quite enjoy listening to you," Derek said honestly. Hearing Stiles go out of his mind with pleasure just boosted his confidence and urged him to see what else he could pull out of the impassioned man. "Now, since you have to go in public tomorrow, I'm going to make sure people know who you belong to."

"How are you going to do thaaaaaâ€¦| Oh holy fuckkkk!" Stiles cried out

â€" loudly â€" as Derek sunk his teeth (human) into his neck and began sucking, his tongue licking over the spot as he endeavored to suck more flesh into his mouth. "Harder," Stiles encouraged, his voice ragged with need.

Derek moaned deep in his throat at the plea from his mate. He dug a little deeper with his teeth, holding his wolf back with all his might, as he sucked even harder. Moving his mouth a little further down, he found a new spot of tender skin to suckle and mark. His mate was delicious, his skin tasting like summer and love and want. Stiles' scent was warm with affection and such a deep desire, it staggered him. His mate had so much love to give and he considered himself blessed to be on the receiving end of it all.

"Derek, Derek, it feels tooâ€¦ too goodâ€¦ too goodâ€¦ I'm a pitiful virgin and this is as far as I've ever gotten," Stile stammered. He could feel his orgasm pooling low in his groin, all too ready to explode in his jeans. "I'm gonnaâ€¦ Oh god this is embarrassingâ€¦"

Growling low, Derek pulled back for a moment. "Not embarrassing, love, hot as hell. Lean back, sweet boy," he encouraged.

Stiles lay against the back of the couch and Derek followed him, sliding his hand up his thigh until his hand deftly unbuttoned and unzipped Stiles' pants and pushed his shirt up to his chest. They couldn't have sex until after the Claiming, but everything up to that was allowed. Stiles let out a long cry as Derek reached into his grey boxer briefs and pulled out his hard, leaking cock.

Derek quickly took in the sight of his mate's rather impressive length, long, lean, and leaking profusely from the tip. "Ah, sweet Stiles, you're so hard for me. You smell so good, mate, smell so wanting just for me," Derek growled in his ear, his wolf all too close to the surface. "Now come for me." He bit him hard in the dip between his neck and shoulder and sucked with all he had while stroking his mate's cock with quick, sure movements.

With a shout, Stiles came all over Derek's hand, his entire body trembling with the force of his release. Derek moaned and his wolf insisted he mark his mate further. He quickly straddled his panting mate and pulled out his own cock, stroking quickly. "Touch me, Stiles," he urged.

Stiles, still lost in the haze of the most intense orgasm of his life, reached up and wrapped his hand around Derek's (oh my god, that thing is HUGE) cock and stroked with Derek's hand over his. It only took a half dozen strokes until Derek gave a loud growl and came on Stiles stomach, stroking until every drop was gone.

Derek collapsed next to his mate, breathing hard and wore out. The orgasm had shocked him with its intensity, it had felt nearly ripped from him. He'd had sex before he'd found Stiles and that couldn't even compare to what he'd just felt.

"That was amazing," Derek whispered.

"Uh huh," Stiles said with a squeak. "Me too. Dead now."

Derek chuckled. After a moment, he made his way to the bathroom and

came back with a warm washcloth, pants zipped back up and looking composed.

Stiles didn't understand how he could do it. His brain was still leaking out his ears. He watched as Derek seemed to stare at their combined mess on his stomach in awe. The alpha reached out with a finger and rubbed his finger through the still warm come. Soon his whole hand was in the mess and was rubbing it into Stiles skin. "Ummm," he said and then looked up. Derek's eyes were glowing red and his fangs had descended. He was obviously lost in his animal. Stiles decided to just let him do whatever his wolf was wanting him to do and just lay there, enjoying the fuck awesome post-orgasm laxness in his body.

Derek finished marking his mate and then cleaned him up, the cloth not as warm as it was. Stiles' stomach jerked then relaxed quickly.

A few minutes later they were sitting snuggled together, clothes back in place and brains back on line. Somewhat. "Do you have any preferences for our Claiming?" Derek didn't have to ask Stiles as it was ultimately up to him, but he didn't want to do it somewhere Stiles didn't want to be.

"Um, like we talked about before. Outdoors somewhere. I like the idea of that better than being stuck in a stuffy room somewhere. But it's up to you and I trust you, so whatever you decide," Stiles said honestly.

Derek heard his heart was steady and smiled at his mate. His trust was not something he took for granted. He treasured it and vowed to make it a memorable, beautiful moment for them both. "I love you, Stiles."

His mate grinned shyly. "I love you too."

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Stiles was flying high as he made his way through his classes on Monday. He had not only a boyfriend, but a shifter boyfriend, not only a shifter, but a freaking alpha and not just a boyfriend, but a future (please, oh please, let it be soon) mate. A mate. Him. Stiles fuh-reaking Stilinski had a future mate. A mate who loved him and had loved him for three years. He'd had moments of wondering why being Derek's mate wasn't important enough to push through Derek's self-doubt and fears, but it didn't last long. He thought of how he'd felt after he lost his mom whom he knew would die. He was lost without her. Derek not only lost his entire family, but they were killed and he had to deal with the guilt of not saving all of them. Not that he would have been able to. He'd snuck in and read the report in his dad's office. There was no way Derek would have been able to save his parents and aunt. They were already dead when Derek was struggling to get his sisters out of the house. Stiles put the doubts and worries to rest and contented himself with the love that he knew Derek felt for him and vice versa.

He put his books in his locker and then ran his hand over the deep purple mark Derek had left on his neck to brand Stiles as his own. Sure it was a hickey but to Stiles, it was a mark of love and ownership, a promise of the Claiming to come. He'd left all the

decisions in Derek's capable hands and he had a stirring in his stomach, a deep excitement, as he waited for Derek to show up and claim him. It was like waiting for Christmas with a mile of presents waiting under the tree knowing he was getting exactly everything he could have ever asked or dreamed of— only a billion times better. Maybe a quadrillion times better. Yeah. That.

"I see Derek finally fessed up," Boyd's amused voice came from behind him.

"Indeed, dear Boyd, he did indeed," Stiles said magnanimously, gesturing widely with his hands. "I am one with the Alpha wolf of Beacon Hills." He couldn't help the laugh that burst out of him. He was so filled with joy, he had to share it.

Boyd shook his head with a grin. "You're an idiot."

Stiles nodded. "Yes, yes I am. An idiot in love," he added. "Shall we?"

They both turned at the sound of a deep growl behind them. They turned and Boyd immediately moved in front of Stiles.

"What the fuck is that on your neck, Stiles? You know you are my mate. How dare you, you little whore," Theo snarled at him. "I thought you would have learned after my message this weekend."

"So you admit it was you who vandalized my jeep? We already got your scent off it, so this just confirms it. Dad will be happy to hear it," Stiles snarked, fully confident now.

"Stiles," Boyd warned.

"Yeah, Stiles, you don't want to piss me off. You haven't seen the wrath of a mate who has been wronged, have you? You haven't seen the damage a wolf can do to property—or people if they are pushed far enough. I'd be careful if I were you, Stiles. You are pushing me and there will be a time when I push back," Theo warned before stalking off, growling at anyone who was in his way.

"Stiles, damn it, don't push him," Boyd said, glaring at Stiles.

"What? So I'm just supposed to stand there and tremble in front of him and be a victim? No way in hell, Boyd. My only weapon is my mouth—my words, come on, don't think that, geez ya perv," Stiles said as Boyd lifted an imperious brow. "Did you take lessons from Derek on brow speak?"

"What the hell are you talking about now?" Boyd shook his head looking confused.

Stiles grinned. "You know, the way Derek can call you an idiot just with the use of his eyebrows. You just did that with your brows. Judging me and all that," he said, flipping his hands up. Then he sighed when Boyd didn't take the bait of his joke. "Come on, Boyd. I'm 160lbs soaking wet of gangly human. The only weapon I have against a nutsoid rogue wolf are my words. What do you want me to do, lower my head and let him threaten me until I'm having a panic attack in the corner?" he was really getting mad now. He hated feeling

helpless and without mouthing off, that is exactly how he would feel.

Boyd was busily texting away on his phone so he scoffed at him and swept passed, deciding to walk to his class by himself. His guard-wolf quickly caught up to him and gave him a low growl to let him know he wasn't pleased.

Boyd took his arm and stopped him. "I don't want you to feel helpless, but pushing him isn't a good idea. One wrong word could push him over the edge and instead of force-claiming you, he could kill you. Is that worth mouthing off to him?" Boyd's expression was serious.

Stiles sighed heavily. "Of course not. I just hate this! I can't wait for Derek to claim me, then the asshole will have to stop. Right?"

Boyd looked at the vulnerable expression on his friend's face and shared in his sigh. "Yeah, buddy, he'll stop then." He just hoped Derek got to it as quickly as possible. Theo wasn't going to wait long, not now that Derek marked Stiles. His phone buzzed with a text.

Wednesday, don't tell him. Stiles can go home and stay there til then if necessary. I trust you to make the decision. I'll be driving around near the school in case you need me. Something doesn't feel right. â€" Derek

Boyd felt lighter knowing that his alpha was near and they only had to get through a couple more days then Stiles would be safe. And Derek would have the legal right to go after anyone that threatened or tried to harm his mate no matter their age or pack status. That was something to look forward to.

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At lunch, Stiles was munching his daily allowance of badly cooked fries. Badly cooked fries were still better than no fries at all, he maintained to the disgust of those eating around him. Erica sat between him and Boyd, looking back and forth between them as they chatted about mundane things. Stiles wasn't contributing much, he was too busy eating and thinking of Derek, reaching up to push at his hickey slash mark every now and then. The twinge of pain made him shiver with want remembering Derek, all of Derek. The sight of Derek's cock had played in his Stiles Timetm (yes, his time with himself had finally surpassed itself in awesomeness and intensity and deserved to be trademarked!) over and over until he'd passed into an orgasm-drunken sleep. It was huge and he had no idea how it was going to fit when it came time for the Claiming. Sure he'd played around back there plenty of times, much more since he'd fallen for Derek. He could take three fingers (awkwardly) somewhat easily. He had to work up to it. If he wasn't terrified of his dad finding it, he would order a toy online, but there was no way he would risk it.

"Stop it, Stiles, you're stinking up our lunch," Erica said, nudging him with her shoulder.

"Then tell your alpha to stop being so hot," he responded with a wink.

Erica stuck her tongue out at him so of course he had to respond in kind. They both laughed before Erica asked Boyd to go buy her an iced coffee before class. He, of course, jumped up to do so. He not-so-secretly loved doing things like that for her. But, as Scott and Stiles had learned the hard way, you better not tease or give him shit about it. He turned to Erica to ask her a question.

None of them saw the wolf approach. He did so quietly and during the time of the lunch period when the stench of food was strong enough to mask certain scents. Including the scent of a shifter about to claim his mate.

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****What did you think? I really enjoyed this chapter, Stiles' reactions are so fun to write. I hope you liked it just as much! More to come soon! (And I don't just mean Stiles... ;) ****

****That was bad... but, come on, I have Stiles on the brain! ****

8. Chapter 8

None of them saw the wolf approach. He did so quietly and during the time of the lunch period when the stench of food, teenage humans and shifters, was strong enough to mask certain scents. Including the scent of a shifter about to claim a mate.

Stiles hand was about to put another tasty chicken finger in his mouth when he felt a prick against his side. His head turned to look and the prick became a stab.

"Think quickly before you do anything stupid. One slash and your organs are laying on the floor at your feet. Answer correctly and you live. Answer wrong, well, let's just say you won't walk out of here," a voice whispered to him, the tone cold and amused. "You know, at first this just started to piss off the Alpha. Now? You're mine." A hard cock was rubbed against his back and Stiles felt the chicken fingers rebelling in his stomach.

Before he could even comprehend what the hell was going on, he heard a growl and then a jaw full of shifted fangs were imbedded in the back of his neck, freezing him in place.

Oh fuck, Theo is going to claim me. It's starting right fucking now. What do I do? Do I say no? Do I say yes? Would he really gut me if I said no? What about Derek? I don't want to be Theo's mate. He would probably beat me up or rape me. I love Derek. Where is Derek? Couldn't Derek be the one claiming me? Please? Derek loves me, he marked me and promised that he was the one who would claim me and mate with me. He'd said it would be perfect and then we could have a big party. I want a big party, I don't want to be gutted and have to agree to mate an insane shifter. Oh god, I can't feel my hands. What do I do? I'm so scared. Where is Derek? Why is the room spinning?

Boyd turned at Erica's cry, his stomach dropping as he looked back to see Theo with his jaw locked on the back of Stiles' neck. Grabbing his phone he called Derek; as soon as he heard his alpha's voice, he

simply said "Get to the cafeteria. He's claiming Stiles," and hung up, looking to his friend. Stiles looked frozen, his eyes glazed over in terror. Boyd's claws ripped out of his hands when he saw Theo had his clawed hand dug into Stiles' side.

Theo finally released Stiles' neck, sure he had the human under control. "Do you accept my claim?" Theo roared, a sick smile of triumph on his twisted face. He met Boyd's eyes and winked.

Boyd answered with a growl, but knew he couldn't do anything. By law, nobody could interrupt a Claiming.

Erica had jumped away from the table and came around to Boyd. "He's hurting him, Boyd," she whispered frantically.

He grabbed her hand and squeezed. "I know, Derek's on the way. He was nearby already after this morning. Hopefully he'll stop this."

"How can he? Isn't it against the law?" she asked, looking at him. He hated the helpless fear in her beautiful brown eyes.

"I have a feeling he'll be able to help Stiles get out of it on his own," Boyd said. He could now see Stiles was locked into a panic attack. It was actually the best thing that could happen. As long as he stayed that way, they were in a holding pattern until Derek showed up. If he could get Stiles out of his panic attack before Theo could force him to say 'yes' than there was a chance.

"I asked you a question, Stiles. Aren't you going to answer me?" Theo asked, digging his claws in a little more.

"Stiles!" Scott was running across the cafeteria towards his friend. It was amazing how fast news traveled in a high school.

Boyd grabbed him and pulled him to the side. "Look at Stiles, what do you see?"

Scott looked at his best friend and the look on his face was one he'd seen too many unfortunate times. He was deep in a panic attack, so deep he may not be able to be pulled out. He took a step toward his friend, wanting to help him.

Boyd yanked him back. "No, just leave him be. Derek is on the way."

Scott glared at Boyd. "What does that matter?"

The large beta raised his brows "maybe he had taken after Derek a little bit" at the younger wolf. "Think about it, Scott. Stiles told you what happened this week, yes?" Scott nodded. "Think about what Derek might be able to accomplish that you can't."

Scott thought and then realization lit his eyes. "Until then?"

"Until then we wait and pray to the gods that Theo doesn't get to him."

_Why does that voice keep telling me to say yes? Yes to what? Claiming with Theo? Are you fucking crazy, voice? I'm safe in here.

There is no way I am coming out. Nope. Nobody can hurt me here. Yeah, I'm dizzy as hell and my stomach hurts and I'm scared even though I know nobody can touch me here. Are my thoughts even making sense to me? Where is Derek? I'm scared. It's getting darker here. Are my eyes closed? Ow, fuck, what is that pain in my side? It hurts. I want Derek to kiss it all better. Derek, Derek, Derek. He can help me, I know he can. He is safety. He is my safe. Why is it so scary here? I don't want to say yes! Why does that voice keep demanding it of me? I don't want to say yes. Fuck. Maybe if I just say it, he'll go away. Fine. Okay. Lips? Start cooperating, form the sounds to get out the damn word. Lips, open, okay, they are open. I'm scared. Now, tongue make the y sound, come on, it's like Sesame Street kinda easy. I'm scared. Huh? I'm feeling dizzy. What? Who is talking to me now? I know that voice! Is that Derek? Open your eyes, damn it! If Derek is out there, then everything is going to be okay!_

"Stiles, come on baby, look at me. Good boy, you opened your eyes. Now, look at me. Good. Hi baby. Try to slow your breathing. You have a question to answer. Do you know what the question is?" Derek asked. He wanted to scream. He wanted to roar and rip Theo limb from fucking limb for daring to not only hurt his mate but try and claim his mate. He didn't even let up when Stiles fell into a deep panic attack. Fucker! Calm, Derek, there is time for that later. Mate comes first. Thank god, Stiles' eyes were clearing up a bit, his erratic breathing quieting down. Stiles shook his head, looking extremely confused.

Theo roared behind him, his face shifting. "Do. You. Accept. My. Claim?! Answer me!" he jabbed his claws in even deeper, Stiles' blood seeping out over his hand.

Stiles' body jerked under the pain and pressure in his side. He gasped and moaned, pleading with Derek with his eyes to make it all stop.

"Stiles, look at me. Do you want to be claimed by Theo?" Derek was leaning across the table toward Stiles, his gaze locked on Stiles' confused whiskey eyes.

"You can't interfere in my Claiming, Hale!" Theo raged, his eyes glowing blue.

Stiles began shaking his head. He didn't know much right now, his head was spinning and the room had black and white spots all over it. But he did know he didn't want Theo.

"That's good, baby, very good. If you don't want to be claimed by Theo, say no, now, really loud so everyone can hear. You can do it, I know you can." Derek knew there was a bit of desperation in his voice, but didn't care. He had to get through to Stiles.

Theo's face grew darker at Derek's words, so he stabbed further into Stiles, causing him to scream.

The pain ripped through Stiles like a veil coming off his eyes. Suddenly, he knew exactly what was going on and with a deep breath, he screamed "NO! I do NOT accept your claim!"

The room broke out into applause â€" usually held off for the acceptance of a claim â€" and Theo ripped his claws out of Stiles'

side, causing him to slouch over the side of the table, crying out. Derek growled at the shifter, a challenge clear in his vocalization. Theo glared at him before tilting his neck slightly.

He leaned down to Stiles. "You will be mine, Stilinski, next time your little alpha won't be around," Theo warned and stomped off.

It took everything in Derek to not run after him. But Stiles needed him, that's all that mattered. "Boyd, call the sheriff. Regardless of Claiming laws, you are not allowed to harm anyone," Derek instructed. "Also call for an ambulance and have them meet us at the nurse's office." He rushed around to reach Stiles, pulling him up and into his arms. His mate was shockingly light and he found he enjoyed holding him in his arms like this. He just wished it were for pleasure and not due to him being injured.

He hurried to the nurse's office, hunting it down by following the smell of antiseptic and bleach.

"You doing okay, sweet boy?" He looked down at Stiles and gave him an encouraging smile. As soon as he picked him up, he'd begun to draw the pain away as much as he could, but he knew his mate was still uncomfortable. Taking away his pain had no bearing on his mental state.

Stiles was trembling in his arms, the after effect of his panic attack. Other than that and the ache in his side, he was surprisingly good. He nodded. "Thank you for coming, Derek."

"I'm just glad I'd decided to stick around the area today. I don't want to think about what might have happened if I was any further away," Derek mused, then realized his mistake.

Stiles was immediately swallowed back inside his head. "I almost gave in," he murmured. "I just wanted the pain in my side to stop and for the voice I heard to stop yelling at me. It's a haze in my mind when I'm stuck in a panic attack. I just want to feel safe. I knew I was because I was stuck in my head and yet I wasn't because some part of me still knew Theo was there, a threat was there. If you had been further away, I probably would have said yes just to get him to leave me alone."

Derek refused to let himself be drowned by the familiar doubts that he wasn't enough for Stiles, that he couldn't protect him as he needed. "But I did come, so we don't have to worry about it. All we need to worry about is reporting Theo and getting you healed up. I need you healthy before our Claiming."

It was as if he'd said a magic word. As soon as Stiles heard 'Claiming', his worried face broke into a sunny smile and his eyes twinkled happily up into Derek's. "You're going to claim me," he said with adorable smugness.

Derek returned his grin. "I am, indeed."

"I'm going to be your mate," Stiles continued to brag.

The alpha couldn't help pulling his mate a little closer so he could kiss those plush pink lips. "You are," his voice was gruff.

"I'm going to be Stiles Hale," the boy said, his voice now dreamy.

Derek paused in the hallway. He hadn't considered that part. It pleased his wolf immensely. "You'd really change your last name to mine?"

Stiles frowned at him. "Of course I will. You know humans see Claimings as marriage. If we were both human and marrying, I would take your last name. Why, do you not want me to?" he looked suddenly worried.

"No, of course I want you to, I would love it, in fact," Derek clarified. "I just honestly hadn't considered that. You are the only child of the sheriff, are you sure you don't want to hyphenate?"

His mate snorted. "Nah. There are Stilinski cousins out there somewhere, let them carry the family name and all the teasing it brings with it. I am still my father's son and can still pass on family stories and traditions. It doesn't have to have a name attached to it. Besides, I will be proud to be a Hale," he said.

"And I will be proud to have you be a Hale," Derek said. Stiles scent went sour with pain and he tried not to show his alarm as he looked down and saw his hand was covered in his mate's blood. He kept leeching what he pain could and hurried his steps and within a minute was passing through the door to the empty nurse's office. He lay his precious mate on the small bed and went to the supply closet and grabbed a handful of gauze. Gently, he tore Stiles' flannel and t-shirt away from the wound and pressed the gauze to the wound. The claw stabs were deep, too deep. He worried about infection setting in. Shifters didn't carry disease or germs inside their body, but outside? On their claws? They were certainly capable. It was a common and effective weapon against humans for purist shifters. As deep as these wounds were, if an infection were to set in, it could affect Stiles' organs. He refused to think what it could do past that. Realizing his mate had been silent for too long, he looked up from where he was taping the gauze in place to see Stiles had lost consciousness. Damn it!

Gathering his limp body into his arms and tucking him close to his natural heat, he hurriedly left the room and ran to the front of the building. Just as he opened the door the Sheriff's car followed by an aid car pulled up to the walk way. Derek made his way to the aid car and informed the workers what happened to Stiles. The Sheriff ran over and listened in as he spoke.

"Boyd said it was Raeken?" John Stilinski's voice was gruff. Stiles obviously got his eyes from his mother as his dad had light blue eyes that now brightly shone with worry.

"Yes. He stabbed Stiles with his claws in order to coerce him into saying yes to a Claiming. Luckily, he was unsuccessful," Derek said as he helped the paramedics load Stiles into the ambulance.

"I'll meet you at the hospital," the Sheriff said, his eyes going cold. He took out his stun baton and stalked into the school.

Derek sent a quick text to Boyd to help the Sheriff locate Theo and

hopped into the ambulance to ride with Stiles. It was hard to watch as they inserted a needle into his arm for an IV, but he refused to look away. He would watch anything his mate had to go through. It was good to prepare himself now because he knew it would be overwhelming to his senses once he got there. The human ward didn't use the special unscented chemicals to clean like the shifter ward did. They also didn't use the machinery that was specially built to be quieter for the sake of shifter ears. It was going to be loud and very hard on his nose, but he could handle it as long as he could stay with his mate.

Two hours later, Stiles' wounds were finished being cleaned out and sewn up. It had been harder than Derek thought it would be. Not the smells or noise level, but watching other people touch and handle his mate. He constantly found himself wanting to shift and stand over his mate, growling at anybody who dared to approach him. That would only harm his mate further, so he concentrated on drawing as much pain from his mate as possible as he watched the needle appear and disappear into Stiles' pale skin.

Finally, after what seemed like a lifetime, though it was only a short time compared to most hospital visits, Stiles was put in a room and Derek was able to close the door to the rest of the hospital. The room was mostly silent, the nurse having turned off the sound on the machines Stiles was hooked up to so Derek didn't get a headache. It was too late for that, but it was a small price to pay.

The doctor had cleaned out Stiles' wounds but, like Derek, was worried about infection. They could only get so much before they had to let nature take its course. Stiles would stay until the next day to make sure he didn't develop a fever. If he did not, he was free and clear. If he did get a fever, they would have to start him on antibiotics and maybe even open his wounds back up in order to pack them with antibiotic material. The doctor was not concerned with Stiles still being asleep, saying that between the assault and the panic attack, it was just too much for his body and it was easier for him to be asleep for now. He anticipated him waking up soon, so Derek continued to watch his mate for any subtle movements. More than anything he wanted to gaze into those eyes again and renew their connection. He hated feeling so damn helpless.

This whole thing was playing hell with his need to protect Stiles and feeling unworthy of the job. He had to keep his attention on Stiles so he didn't obsess. It was not going well so far.

His phone buzzed. It was from Boyd. _Raeken split. Twins are on the trail and keeping Sheriff updated. Will let you know as soon as things change. Peter is on the way to you to help keep Stiles safe. Let us know when Stiles is okay, many are worried._

He responded. _Good work. Stiles is unconscious but is stitched up. Doing good for now, will be here until tomorrow unless fever hits. Cross your fingers it doesn't. No visitors until Stiles gives the ok. I'll keep you posted._

Just as he slid his phone back in his pocket, a light knock came at the door. He let out a low growl until he scented Peter even through the stringent hospital smells. "Come in," he said quietly.

Peter entered, his face in a frown when he caught sight of Stiles.

"How is he?"

Derek updated him, appreciating Peter's presence more than he could say. His uncle came to him and squeezed the back of his neck to give him comfort.

"And how are you doing?"

Of course Peter would know he was beating himself up. "About as well as you'd expect me to be doing. I'm pissed that I didn't just kill the bastard before this. I wish I had been traveling the halls of the school. Et cetera," he said with a shrug.

"I could go into how you saved Stiles from being pushed into an unwanted mating and how he got help for his wounds so much faster because of you, but I won't. Instead I will say this—get over it. There is absolutely nothing that can come of your worrying and beating yourself up. It won't help Stiles wake up or heal, it won't make you feel any better and it certainly won't make you a better mate or alpha. All it will do is take you away from your pack and your mate. So, put it aside. As many times as it takes until the thoughts stay away for good. Then you will be free to care for Stiles and the pack. Got it?" Peter was no-nonsense, as always and it was exactly what Derek needed to hear. As always.

"Thank you," he said simply.

"Now," Peter moved on without acknowledging his words, again, as always. They didn't trade emotional words, they shared the occasional touch, but that was fleeting and it was perfect for them. "I would suggest talking with the Sheriff when he gets here about young Stiles moving in with the pack now. Until the Claiming, there is just no way to guarantee his safety at his house unless you stayed there with him. I think the entire pack and maybe even the Sheriff himself would feel safer with the both of you at the pack house. What do you think?" His uncle always gave advice that was worth heeding and he did so now.

"It sounds good to me. I will need to talk to Stiles about it, but I will heavily suggest that it is a good idea. Hopefully the Sheriff won't put up a fight about it. A gun can't protect as well as an entire pack, not to mention our security system is top of the line," Derek mused.

"You don't have to try and convince me, nephew. Now, what do you need? How can I help you?" Peter gave him an encouraging smile. His nephew was nearly there, nearly achieving his dream of having his mate and his pack safe and sound. Peter may not be able to have his dream anymore, but he would do whatever it took to make sure Derek had his.

"Just hanging around the hospital to keep an eye out for Raeken. Maybe run the perimeter a couple times. Stiles will definitely be here overnight, maybe longer, so get help if you need it. I need you at your strongest. With me helping Stiles, I will be depending on you to help with the pack. Put together any teams that you may need and I'll help enforce it if necessary," the alpha said, finding it hard to think of anything except his mate.

Peter shook his head. "No need. You have trained your pack well, they

listen to me just fine. I'll see about getting some of the older wolves to help out during the night. What would you think of putting a call out to Deucalion so he can keep ears and eyes out for Raeken?"

"That's a great idea, actually. I'll call him. Would you mind staying with Stiles until I get back in? I don't want to wake him up," Derek said, already knowing the answer.

"Of course," Peter said coming around the bed and taking up a spot near Stiles head. He watched as his nephew hurried from the room, pulling his phone out. "You're a lucky young man, Stiles Stilinski. And since you're unconscious I have no problem telling you that if you hurt Derek, I will happily skin you alive. It won't kill you, but you will wish for it." Peter never claimed he had good timing so when Stiles started twitching, he cursed under his breath.

"Harsh doood," Stiles muttered.

The wolf could smell the human was still heavily drugged, so he hoped he didn't freak him out too bad.

"Unca Peer, yer awrsome," the young man said, dragging his eyelids open. "Creeeeepy as fuck, but awrsome all the same."

Peter chuckled. "I'm glad to hear that, young Stiles. How are you feeling?"

Stiles gave him a sloppy grin in return. "Welllll, I'm feeling purty glad thit I love Drek thiiisssss much," he said, spreading his arms out wide before grimacing and dropping them back to the bed. "'N I'm feelin' purty drugged. And we all know thass frickin' suhweeeeet," he said, dragging the last word out in a high pitched tone.

"Stiles, have you ever had heavy drugs before?" Peter was completely amused by the young man and knew Derek and he would be just fine.

The drugged teen held up a finger. "Jus' onesss. I had my townsâ€|er.. tonnshls, err, those things in my neck taken out."

"Tonsils?" Peter supplied helpfully.

Stiles gave him a thumbs up, with his first and middle finger included for good measure. "You rockkk, cuhreepy unca Peter. Yeah, they didn' tell me I wouldn' wake up right away from the anesâ€| uh.. the sleepy stuff. So Dad says I sat up and started swingin' m'arms roun' and roun' tryin' ta wake myself up. I mighta' takin' out a nurse. Mighta'," he finished, putting a finger to his lips thoughtfully.

"I've heard anesthesia can be difficult to wake up from," Peter said. If he didn't think Derek would kill him, he would video Stiles. This kid was hilarious.

"Sooo, cuhreepy unca, wass' up with you, huh? Why you 'ere and not my Drek? I miss him," Stiles' eyes were wide and wet. "Is he comin' back?"

"I'm here because Derek had to make a quick phone call and yes, he is

most definitely coming back. He has been by your side since you got here," Peter told him. Those light brown eyes were so sad and sweet at the same time.

"Wan' know a seeecret?" Stiles whispered loudly.

"Sure," Peter said with a grin. This ought to be good.

"Drek is all I ever wanted in life," Stiles voice was dreamy.

Peter heard the door open and close behind him, but held up a hand toward him so Derek could hear the ramblings of his drugged mate.

"I thought I's gonna be 'lone for my whoooole life. Then this hot 'n sexy alffffa says he's my mate. Er, I'm his mate. Yeah, that. Anyway, I never thought I would be lovid, but I yam. 'N I'm gonna love him forever and be perfec' for him. He d'serves it, ya know? We both do. I'm so frucken lucky, man. Cuhreepy Unca Peer, is he gonna be back soon? I think I need kisses to get be'er. Kisses'd make the owies go 'way," Stiles mused, staring at his own fingers as he dangled them in front of his eyes.

"I'm here, sweet boy," Derek said, coming over to his mate.

"Everything is taken care of and now I don't have to leave your side again." He stroked his hand down the side of Stiles' face. He stared in awe at the look of utter adoration shining from those whiskey eyes, though they were slightly glazed at the moment.

"Your boy is amusing when he is drugged, nephew. We had quite the conversation," Peter said, feeling a pang at the love that was displayed so openly before him. He missed that so much. It was time for him to run the perimeter anyway, he needed to get away.

"So I heard, creepy Uncle Peter," Derek said with a wide grin, looking back at him. "Thank you for watching over him."

"It was an honor, alpha," Peter replied quietly and left after bowing his head in his nephew's direction.

"Kisses, please D'rek," he heard Stiles murmur as the door closed.

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**The story Stiles told about having a hard time waking up after getting his tonsils about is a true story of mine. I was 14 and wasn't prepared for the drugged out feeling of the anesthesia. My dad said I would swing my arms around and around as I tried to wake up. Nearly took a nurse out. LOL. I thought it would suit Stiles well. Let me know what you thought of the chapter! I enjoyed writing drugged Stilesâ€¦ **

Coming soonâ€¦| Sexy times and a tiny bit o'angst.

End
file.